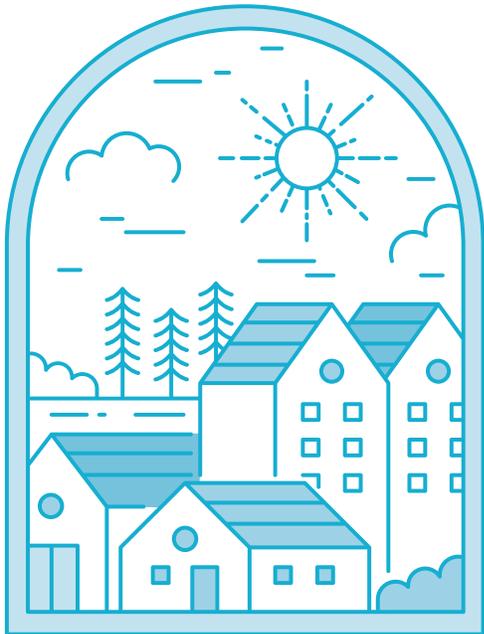




COMMUNITY INNOVATION AWARDS 2025 AWARDS OF MERIT





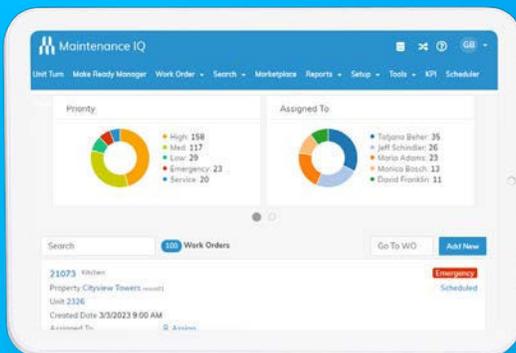
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Welcome to the 2025 Community Innovation Awards!



George Guy
NAHRO President



Mark Thiele
NAHRO CEO

F

or more than 30 years, NAHRO's Awards of Merit have celebrated the power of innovation to strengthen communities and improve lives. These awards honor the vision and determination of our members who are building stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities. This year, 76 public housing and redevelopment agencies earned 184 Awards of Merit in 2025. Their achievements are featured here and in the Best Practices Database at www.nahro.org/best-practice.

All of these award-winning initiatives are also eligible for the 2025 Awards of Excellence, to be presented to fewer than 20 programs at the National Conference and Exhibition in Phoenix, Arizona. Together, the Awards of Merit and the Awards of Excellence form the Community Innovation Program, a recognition that reflects how collective vision and local action can deliver national impact.

The affordable housing crisis is a national challenge, but every solution begins at the local level. This year's winners represent agencies of every size and setting, including rural, urban, and suburban communities that range from small to large. What unites them is a shared purpose: creating opportunity, advancing community priorities, and serving with both imagination and compassion. Their programs demonstrate what leadership in action looks like, from redeveloped housing and health initiatives to workforce succession planning, AI integration, and educational programming that opens doors for the future.

We extend our deepest congratulations to the 2025 NAHRO Awards of Merit winners. Your achievements are more than individual successes; they are proof of what happens when vision and collaboration unite. You remind us that progress is visible in stronger neighborhoods, greater opportunity, and lives renewed with hope. Together, we can carry this momentum forward and continue building communities where every person, every family, every generation has a chance to thrive. With pride and gratitude,

George Guy
President, NAHRO

Mark Thiele
CEO, NAHRO



Administrative Innovation

All photos are courtesy of the agencies.

1 TRANSFORMING HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS IN THE WIREGRASS REGION

Dothan Housing (DH), in partnership with the Southeast Alabama Coalition for the Homeless (SEACH), transformed homelessness efforts in Alabama’s Wiregrass region. By bringing SEACH under its umbrella, DH helped establish the HUD-recognized Wiregrass Continuum of Care. Together, they launched the Wiregrass Metro Area 10-Year Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, leveraging Special Purpose Vouchers, emergency solutions grant funding, and cross-sector partnerships to align resources, improve service delivery, and create sustainable solutions. This model sets a precedent for collaborative, regional approaches to ending homelessness.



Nominated for Excellence

Tera Wells
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2 DRESS FOR YOUR DAY

Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) established a flexible dress standard for employees by applying a “Dress for Your Day” philosophy to support a work

environment that is comfortable and inclusive for employees. Dress for Your Day (DFYD) embodies the basic sentiment that CIHA trusts its employees to exercise good judgment in choosing clothing for the workday. DFYD encourages personal discretion by allowing staff to determine their clothing choices based upon the day-to-day demands of their role and the work they perform. DFYD work attire is intended to be more casual or relaxed when employees have a workday that does not include formal meetings with clients, visitors, or the public.

Sezy Gerow-Hanson
 Cook Inlet Housing Authority
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3 UNITY IN COMMUNITY

Historical barriers to entering lines of business are falling. Recently, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation joined in with a new system of connected apps to help our partners access programs that were historically out of reach due to resource constraints. This platform, affectionately known as Unity, has helped roughly 7,000 Alaskans connect to new housing resources supported by partners from all across our state.



Nominated for Excellence

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4 AGENCY COLLABORATION EFFORT TO EXPAND THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

The Family Self-Sufficiency program at the Garden Grove Housing Authority helps our housing tenants build financial independence through goal setting, employment support, and escrow savings. As a smaller agency, our participation numbers are modest but remain in great standing well above requirement. We are committed to expanding the program to serve more families and support long-term self-sufficiency in our community.

Vy Ho
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5 BUILD AMERICA BUY AMERICA ACT (BABA) IMPLEMENTATION TRAININGS

The Build America, Buy America Act ("BABA") was enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to establish a made in America procurement preference for iron, steel and other products used in certain projects receiving federal financial assistance. Due to limited HUD implementation guidance and technical support, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles developed BABA trainings and support materials in collaboration with our trade associations that identify compliance and implementation issues, while providing internal staff, fellow housing professionals and vendors practical information,

including implementation guidance that will be particularly useful for housing authorities.

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6 HEALTHY HAPPENS HERE (HHH) WELLNESS PROGRAM

Now in its second year, Healthy Happens Here (HHH), a program developed and organized by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) Human Resources Department, is dedicated to promoting employee health, wellness, and engagement. Each month, the initiative introduces a new focus designed to encourage living our best life, both at work and beyond. Through a variety of activities and educational resources, HHH supports employees in developing healthy habits and fostering overall well-being. This ongoing program is a key part of HACLA's commitment to supporting the health and well-being of its staff, with a strong emphasis on physical, mental, and emotional health.

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7 HOUSING SERVICES EMPLOYEE STAY INTERVIEWS

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino implemented a “stay interview” process from October to December 2024 to help address high employee turnover and low morale, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The process gathered insights into motivations, recognition preferences, career development, and concerns. Feedback led to improved communication, process improvement, personalized feedback, and career development opportunities, reducing position vacancies from 14% in September 2024 to 3.5% in March 2025. The process fostered transparency, empowered staff, and is a cost-effective, adaptable model for improving employee retention and engagement.

Nicole Beydler
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8 USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PROCESSING INTERIM REEXAMINATIONS FOR RENT REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) implemented an Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) solution to process approximately 4,000 interim reexaminations. The goal was to minimize the impact on employee workload and implement the reexaminations as soon as possible. The A.I. solution processed the actions rapidly and with minimal errors or staff interaction over a period of several days. Previous projects of this scale required approximately a month to complete, as well as additional resources such as hiring temporary employees and requiring staff overtime. This methodical, tech-forward response highlights HACSB’s capacity for creative problem-solving and agile implementation in the face of complex administrative challenges.

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9 ENTERPRISE RISK ASSESSMENT

To enhance risk management and improve operational efficiency at the Denver Housing Authority, the Audit & Compliance function established an annual risk assessment process in December 2023. Through risk-based interviews with key leadership across the agency, Audit & Compliance developed a comprehensive 2024 audit plan and conducted six operational audits covering critical agency functions. These audits identified approximately \$250,000 in cost savings and cost avoidance opportunities. Additionally, the audit function ensures accountability by conducting ongoing follow-up testing to verify the timely and effective implementation of management’s action plans.

Timothy Beggs
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10 ATTRACTING TALENT TO THE PUBLIC HOUSING INDUSTRY

The New Britain Housing Authority has created a two-pronged effort to expose and attract young talent to the public housing industry and retain those in the industry by investing in their professional development. Recognizing that a career in public housing is not what many seek, but instead often stumble into, our desire is to expose people to the diverse, high impact and people serving career opportunities that exist in public housing, while also supporting the internal growth and promotion of high performing staff with career aspirations.



Nominated for Excellence

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PREPARE FOR MY NEXT ROLE

THINK ABOUT YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS
 What's the next step for you, either at NBHA or somewhere else?
 What's needed to get there?

CREATE A REALISTIC PLAN TO GET THERE
 Is there training available? certification needed? Identify mentor opportunities and a pathway to get you where you want to me. Write your plan with Human Resources .

YOUR WORK; YOUR REWARD
 Execute your plan. Check in with Human Resources; make changes, as needed. It all starts with YOU!

New Britain Housing Authority

TO DISCUSS YOUR CAREER PATH OR LEARN ABOUT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, CONTACT YSELINE GADSON

11 DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY – CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST PORTAL

The Delaware State Housing Authority’s Centralized Waitlist streamlined the housing application process by merging 16 waitlists from 5 PHAs into one platform. Previously, 20,522 applicants submitted 32,762 applications across agencies, causing confusion and inefficiencies. Now, one application serves all lists. Since launch, 12,751 new applicants have submitted 41,593 applications. The system now supports 17,102 active applicants with 48,434 applications, including 30,989 for Section 8—making it easier to apply and stay on the waitlist.

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12 BRIDGE TO HOME: TENANT SUBSIDY PROGRAM – KEEPING RESIDENTS HOUSED THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA), in a departmental collaboration, created a resident program to offset rent increases in two PCHA senior properties: Bridge to Home. Bridge is a proactive and 100% PCHA funded initiative to prevent displacement due to rising rental costs. By allocating revenue from PCHA’s rental income on these senior properties, the Bridge to Home provides financial assistance to qualifying residents experiencing a rent increase they cannot afford. This “bridge” allows residents to age with grace, remain in their homes, avoid lease terminations, eviction proceedings, and maintain housing stability—while ensuring the long-term financial health of PCHA’s portfolios.



Nominated for Excellence

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13 LEADING WITH LOGIC AND HEART: HOW PCHA USES AI TO DRIVE INNOVATION, CLARITY, AND EQUITY

At the Pinellas County Housing Authority, AI isn't just a tool—it's a strategic partner enhancing how we plan, communicate, and serve. Without a tech team or new infrastructure, we integrated AI into daily operations to support executive decision-making, streamline processes, and elevate staff communications. From resident event flyers to board materials, policy design, and program development, AI has helped staff work smarter and faster. The result: more time to focus on what matters most—improving the lives of our residents



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**14 SPARK U: YOUR FUTURE.
YOUR GROWTH. YOUR SPARK.**

SPARK University (SPARK U) is a professional development initiative designed to cultivate leadership and management excellence among Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) employees. Through a structured program of training, mentorship, and hands-on learning, SPARK empowers participants to grow as leaders, enhance their management skills, and contribute to the employee's and agency's long-term success. SPARK U's mission is to develop, inspire, and retain high-potential employees by providing them with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to lead effectively within PCHA and the communities that are served.

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15 HCV WAITLIST MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Within a year, the Housing Authority of Champaign County's Housing Choice Voucher team Housing Choice Voucher team fully processed the Moving to Work Tenant-Based waiting list from August 2023, offering and handling 2,000 applications. To address ongoing demand, we opened a new list in August 2024, accepting 4,000 applications. This expansion reflects our commitment to providing housing assistance to more eligible households while ensuring program efficiency.



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16 APPLIED LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Fort Wayne Housing Authority (FWHA) partnered with Purdue University Fort Wayne (PFW) to enhance leadership skills within the organization through the Applied Leadership Program. The Applied Leadership Certificate program is designed to educate leaders about critical aspects of effective organization and management and ultimately equips participants to maximize their positive influence. Upon completing the program, they were awarded a PFW Applied Leadership Certificate to demonstrate their leadership proficiency. This collaboration between the FWHA and PFW enhanced leadership skills across all levels of staff, and all participants successfully completed the program and earned a certificate.

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17 THE KOKOMO HOUSING AUTHORITY & CARVER COMMUNITY CENTER JUNETEENTH SUMMER CELEBRATION

The Kokomo Housing Authority (KHA) began celebrating Juneteenth in 2020. What started as a small event mainly for residents of KHA properties grew. Over the last two years, a partnership with the Carver Community Center allowed KHA to combine its Juneteenth Celebration with Carver's Summer Celebration. This partnership has allowed an expansion of the Juneteenth Celebration to the entire community.

Juneteenth not only celebrates the contributions and history of African American people; it provides an opportunity for KHA residents and participants to get connected with local community resources and foster a sense of belonging within the community as a whole.

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18 BUILDER'S SESSIONS

Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) launched Builder's Sessions to cultivate a new mindset—one that embraces innovation, creativity, and adaptability in an evolving industry where standard approaches no longer meet the complex challenges Housing Authorities face. These quarterly sessions brought together senior leaders and forward-thinking team members from all levels to collaborate across departments, explore problem-solving techniques, and drive real change. The sessions have laid the groundwork for lasting cultural transformation, fostering internal innovation and collaboration—leading to tangible improvements at GHA.

Maggie Larkins
Greensboro Housing Authority
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19 LEADING THE WAY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) launched the Leading the Way Leadership Academy as a key initiative of GHA University, which is grounded in three pillars: Leadership, Personal, and Professional Development. Through monthly sessions with team members and senior leaders, Leadership Academy builds the skills, mindset, and confidence needed to lead with integrity, accountability, and purpose. Designed to support the whole person—professionally, personally, and as a leader—it strengthens GHA’s culture, deepens engagement, and enhances adaptability in a constantly evolving housing landscape.



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20 STRATEGIC PATH FROM 91% TO 101% VOUCHER UTILIZATION

How did the Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) increase voucher utilization from 91% to 101% in 22 months? This is the story of how RHA overcame significant obstacles to reach its goal of full utilization. RHA administers 4,400 vouchers. Its Housing Choice Voucher Department conducts all processes from eligibility, voucher issuance, initial certifications through lease-up. Other partners include Nan McKay, which provided temporary support to assist with annual reviews. Wake County and RHA provided landlord incentives for new units leased. Over 1,000 landlords are key partners, including three owners under a new Project-Based Voucher Program.



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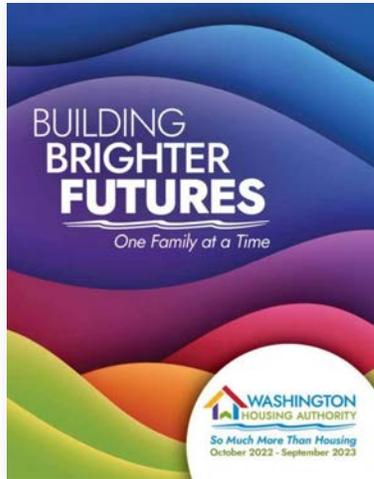


Raleigh
Housing
Authority

21 ANNUAL REPORT

The Washington Housing Authority (WHA) developed a digital annual report publication and uploaded the digital file to the agency’s website for public access. Prior to development of the digital report, WHA produced only traditional, printed reports. These printed reports were filled with pages of facts and figures that did not effectively convey the mission or vision of the agency. In an effort to provide a “green” technology-driven solution, reduce consumables, and increase awareness for WHA’s programs and services, our agency re-imagined the annual report as a 24/7 ADA-accessible, interactive, digital publication which showcases success stories and achievements of our residents and staff.

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22 WEBSITE

The Washington Housing Authority (WHA) website, WashingtonHousingAuthority.org, serves as a primary communications tool and information resource for residents, participants, staff, and community partners. In 2023, WHA added to their existing dynamic website by implementing three new innovative components to streamline the delivery of information (Enhanced Contact Form), enhance engagement with stakeholders (Facebook Content Management System integration), and provide a resource hub for employees (password-protected staff portal). These website enhancements simplify communication processes, facilitate cohesive cross-platform messaging, and provide a centralized knowledge base for WHA staff.

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23 AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) TRAINING

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority implemented American Sign Language (ASL) training for staff to enhance inclusivity and communication that consisted of three 10-week cohorts, led by a deaf instructor, that covered basic signs and deaf culture. The diverse departmental participation during the sessions fostered team building and the ASL training improved customer service and accessibility.



Nominated for Excellence

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24 HOME FORWARD RE-IMAGINED: EQUITY AND EMPLOYEE-CENTERED PRACTICES

Home Forward is reimagining the relationship between employee support and long-term internal and external impact by building a proactively anti-racist, trauma-informed culture and focusing on centering humanity in the workplace. Through policies for racial harm, trauma and harm leave, employer sponsored time and organizational days of rest, as well as resources for learning and career development and a revamp of the performance review process, Home Forward is making strides in employee well-being and engagement that benefit and build a stronger internal community so

that we can provide more appropriate and meaningful support to the community at large.



Kitty Miller
Home Forward
 135 SW Ash St.,
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25 HOW THE ACHA HAS APPROACHED LANDLORD COMMUNICATION

As Landlord Liaisons, the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) staff communicate with landlords about becoming more involved in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. ACHA’s goal is to be transparent and educational about happenings: keeping in touch daily, always being available to chat, and to market ACHA and what the agency does (i.e. putting ads out on social media, sending emails 2x/a week, creating new outlets to showcase open and available units to tenants) is crucial to the agency’s success with the landlords! The agency takes pride in its marketing efforts as a Government agency and in working seamlessly and effectively.

Hannah Lapiska
Allegheny County Housing Authority
 301 Chartiers Ave.,
 Mc Kees Rocks, PA 15136-3837
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26 GROWING UP GEN Z YOUTH PROGRAM

Columbia Housing’s Growing Up Gen Z Youth Program provides a vital, safe space for youths aged 13–18 to engage in workshops and sessions focused on Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) topics, including adolescent development, healthy relationships, life skills, financial literacy, education and career services. We meet weekly, offering consistent support, structure, and opportunities for young participants to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.



Nominated for Excellence

Barry Hall
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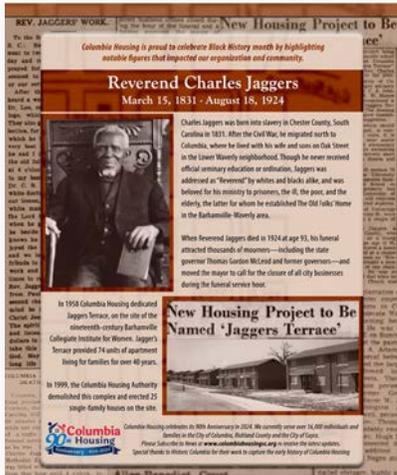


27 PAST EXCELLENCE FUELS FUTURE SUCCESS

History and Culture are often undervalued by people who don’t understand their importance and relevance. Columbia Housing’s communications department has embarked on a transformative journey to reconnect our community with its rich history through the nostalgic sepia-toned graphic series featuring historic photos. This initiative not only celebrates the past but also emphasizes the importance of understanding our roots, especially for our younger generations. The series highlights the remarkable contributions of

individuals who have shaped our community, ensuring their legacies continue to inspire future success.

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28 THE STATE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

As the largest public housing authority in South Carolina and the state’s leading provider of affordable housing solutions, Columbia Housing launched a landmark virtual policy briefing—The State of Affordable Housing in South Carolina—to inform and engage elected officials, candidates, and community leaders during critical election cycles. This digital initiative provides a data-rich, human-centered, and solution-oriented overview of South Carolina’s affordable housing crisis, strategically timed around midterm and general elections when many statehouse seats are up for reelection.



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The banner features the text "CALLING ALL SOUTH CAROLINA CANDIDATES, POLICY MAKERS & DECISION MAKERS!!" and "ZOOMING TO THE POLLS The STATE of AFFORDABLE HOUSING in SC: A Virtual Overview for Candidates, Policy Makers & Decision Makers Tuesday, October 22, 2024 - 11:00 am to 11:45 am via Zoom". It includes a QR code and a photo of Yvonda A. Bean and Mark Thiele. Below the photo, it says "presented by: Yvonda A. Bean, CEO, Columbia Housing" and "Mark Thiele, CEO, NAHRO". A small text at the bottom reads: "Addressing the affordable housing shortage in South Carolina is crucial for economic stability and growth. Without sufficient affordable housing, low- and moderate-income families face financial strain, which can hinder their ability to contribute productively to the economy."



29 YOUTH ENRICHMENT SERIES

Columbia Housing conducts a Youth Enrichment Program for resident youths who are enrolled in the agency’s annual Summer Youth Employment Program during the month of July. In 2024, the Youth Enrichment Program was added to the student’s weekly routine to teach them about civics-related issues such as community activism, voting and voter education, interacting with elected officials, and advocacy.



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30 AFFORDABLE HOUSING OUTLOOK 2025

Opportunity Home San Antonio hosted the “Affordable Housing Outlook 2025” event on February 21, 2025, at UTSA Downtown to discuss San Antonio’s housing challenges. Leaders from Opportunity Home and the City of San Antonio opened the event. Sessions

covered 2024 successes, legislative outlooks, housing production/financing, and innovative solutions. Panels included city officials, state senators, and industry experts. Key topics were federal funding uncertainty, local collaboration, and the need for innovative approaches. The event aimed to start a crucial conversation about the future of affordable housing in San Antonio.

Aiyana Longoria
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**31 AN INNOVATIVE LEAP FORWARD:
 TRANSFORMING DOCUMENT
 MANAGEMENT AT OPPORTUNITY HOME**

Opportunity Home implemented Laserfiche Cloud, a centralized digital repository, in response to inefficient and outdated document management practices that caused an administrative burden for staff. Nearly four million files (200 GB) were digitized with automated metadata extraction. Streamlined workflows, robust security, and improved access were established—the result was enhanced efficiency, reduced errors, and better service delivery. By embracing Laserfiche, the agency modernized its digital file process and fostered a culture of innovation. The project exemplifies a forward-thinking approach to document management challenges by leveraging technology to enhance operations.



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**32 COMMUNITY SIGNAL: BRIDGING
 RESIDENTS, MANAGEMENT,
 AND SAFETY IN REAL TIME**

Opportunity Home San Antonio's Signal Application is a secure end-to-end encryption platform for real-time communication and situational awareness between management and the security department. The problem was the expense of traditional radios, group texts lacked encryption, and emails lacked speed and coordination. The innovative solution solved the problem of delayed, fragmented communications. The result was a free, encrypted messaging platform for instant updates, multimedia sharing, and cross-department collaboration. This innovative solution streamlined incident response and enhanced safety by providing situational awareness improving efficiency without added cost.



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33 EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND DETECTION OF THREATS

Opportunity Home San Antonio’s Early Identification and Detection of Threats Program is a proactive threat assessment initiative to recognize and mitigate security risks before they escalate into serious incidents. It detects, identifies, assesses, and responds to potential threats in real-time. It integrates technology, intelligence reconnaissance, and proactive strategies for enhanced situational awareness. The problem was that daily police calls for service were not analyzed. The innovative solution examined the data to identify and understand the patterns. The result was a data-driven, community-oriented effort to tackle problems in collaboration with residents, law enforcement, security personnel, and management.



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PROPERTY	PROPERTY	OTHER	VIOLENT	PROPERTY SELECTION	WARRANTS	TRAFFIC	DRUG	Grand total
Alamo	173	177	152	42	83	20	10	1,267
Camden	146	141	276	16	242	17	9	1,662
Lincoln Heights	142	144	171	22	24	14	9	963
East Madison	132	136	132	22	14	17	7	611
Garden at San Juan Square	134	132	100	18	23	17	8	477
Midland	118	117	125	22	16	9	3	495
Monarch at Conchita	174	93	106	14	9	9	9	399
South at Middle Creek	126	93	94	14	12	11	2	382
Rosewood at University	120	103	93	12	11	9	1	274
BlancaView Village	213	63	54	4	9	9	1	272
The Meadows	112	42	78	17	9	10	2	267
Rosewood at Highland Park	116	103	106	17	9	9	2	382
Woodhill Apartments I	91	124	81	16	16	4	2	242
Woodhill Apartments II	108	112	67	10	7	9	4	237
University	92	110	86	17	17	9	4	206
Monarch at Mission Creek	112	72	45	16	14	12	1	288
Springview	91	91	71	14	20	14	1	284
Sevend? Lido	82	79	100	9	9	9	2	262
Grand total	6,678	5,506	6,527	878	713	478	143	18,536

34 EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Housing authorities serve as cornerstones of community welfare, providing affordable housing and essential services to residents. Ensuring the safety and security of these communities is paramount, requiring a multifaceted approach that includes robust emergency alert systems. These systems are not merely technological add-ons but critical infrastructure that can mitigate risks, improve response times, and ultimately protect

lives and property. Opportunity Home San Antonio’s comprehensive suite of emergency alert systems demonstrates its approach to fostering safe and thriving communities.



Nominated for Excellence

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35 EMPOWER & ELEVATE: NEW SUPERVISOR TRAINING

Opportunity Home San Antonio launched new supervisor training in February 2024 to better prepare newly promoted supervisors. This one-day program covers the topics of legal compliance, performance management, employee relations, security, recruitment, payroll, and procurement. Supervisors must attend within 90 days of promotion. Outcomes include enhanced role understanding, improved leadership skills, tools for handling situations, understanding documentation importance, and increased supervisor capacity. Based on the positive feedback received, HR plans to add a second day focused on soft skills, further developing supervisor capabilities and contributing to the organization’s success.

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36 HAPPY AUDITING: HOW DATABASES MAKE PH COMPLIANCE AUDITS EASIER

One of the responsibilities of Opportunity Home San Antonio's Internal Audit Department is the performance of client file compliance audits for the Public Housing program. For many years, the process of selecting files for audit and for reporting results was very labor-intensive. By establishing a database, efficiency was improved as audit results can be reviewed, scored, communicated to management and staff, and responded to, all via the database. The database also provides input for staff training as error trends are seen. The database was created and implemented by Opportunity Home San Antonio staff.



Allison Schlegel
 Opportunity Home San Antonio
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37 HR'S DIGITAL MAKEOVER: LASERFICHE TAKES CENTER STAGE

Opportunity Home San Antonio's Human Resources Department transitioned to Laserfiche for digital file management. This move replaced paper files with a secure, accessible digital system. Benefits include enhanced access, better organization, increased security, streamlined workflows, reduced storage space, cost savings, improved collaboration, faster retrieval, audit trails, and disaster recovery. The six-month process has led to improved efficiency and productivity.



38 MID TO HIGH RISE CAMERA AND SECURITY PROJECT

Opportunity Home San Antonio took strides to further increase resident safety and security by installing 229 cameras with intrusion protection, alarm systems, and network video recorders at 18 of our mid- to high-rise communities. The project was implemented over 17 months, with many bandwidth, networking, and infrastructure challenges. This solution has assisted our security department and the San Antonio Police Department with multiple investigations. This system acts as a deterrent and increases the sense of safety among residents and staff. The communities chosen for this project house a large percentage of our elderly and disabled residents.



Jo Alvarado
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Nominated for Excellence

COMPLETED PROPERTIES

18 Mid to High Rise Properties + NVR Solution

Property	Office Camera	Camera Count	Intrusion	Alarm	Access Control
Blanco	Yes	11	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fair Avenue	Yes	29	Yes	Yes	Yes
Henry B Gonzalez	Yes	8	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jewett Circle	Yes	8	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kenwood North	Yes	12	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lewis Chatham	Yes	19	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lita Cockrell	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Marie McGuire	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mart Garcia	Yes	11	Yes	Yes	Yes
OP Schnabel	Yes	11	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parkview	Yes	21	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pin Oak I	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Pedro Arms	Yes	8	Yes	Yes	Yes
Springview	Yes	13	No	No	No
Sun Park Lane	Yes	19	Yes	Yes	Yes
Victoria Plaza	Yes	18	Yes	Yes	Yes
Villa Hermosa	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Villa Tranchese	Yes	29	Yes	Yes	Yes
WC White	Yes	12	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total Cameras		229			

**39 OPTIMIZING REAL ESTATE ASSETS:
A SELF-ASSESSMENT JOURNEY**

The Opportunity Home San Antonio’s board-approved FY23–24 Audit Plan included the audit of Asset Management: Financing and Refinancing of Real Estate Assets. Due to a change in management, a Controlled Self-Assessment (CSA) was prioritized over an audit to establish internal controls and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

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40 PUBLIC HOUSING

Opportunity Home San Antonio implemented a multi-pronged initiative to safeguard public housing through targeted preventative maintenance and security enhancements. Programs included HVAC and boiler preventative maintenance, DAWGS break-in protection for vacant units and preventing property damage. These efforts improved safety, reduced emergency repairs by 34% and extended asset life. The initiative aligns with NAHRO’s vision by promoting innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence in public housing.

Ruth Bautista
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41 THE DATA BLUEPRINT: OPPORTUNITY HOME DATA MANUAL

The “Opportunity Home Data Manual,” released in November 2024, supports a robust data governance program based on DAMA’s DMBOK and Texas Data Ethics. It ensures data quality, accessibility, and integrity throughout Opportunity Home San Antonio. The manual details governing principles, operating models, data standards, and governance processes, promoting accountability, collaboration, and privacy. Key benefits include improved service delivery, data-driven decision-making, and legal compliance. As a living document, it guides all data stewards, ensuring data is treated as a strategic asset and supports mission-critical priorities.

Aiyana Longoria
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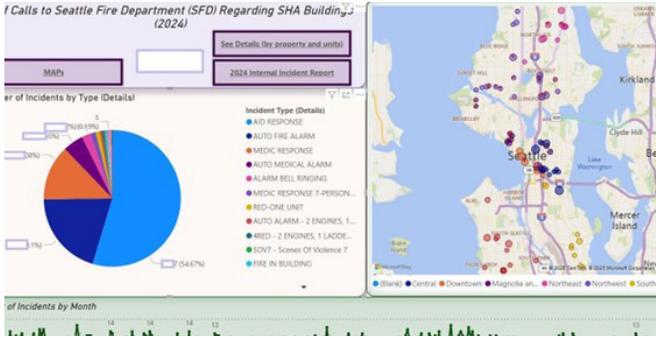


42 SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY SECURITY INCIDENT REPORT

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Security Incident Report is an innovative data-driven tool that integrates Seattle Fire Department emergency response data with SHA’s internal incident reports to proactively identify safety risks, track emergency response trends, and improve resident security. By leveraging real-time data, SHA leadership can enhance emergency preparedness, optimize maintenance responses, and provide targeted resident services. SHA is also planning to establish a data-sharing agreement with the Seattle Police Department to expand crime data integration and further strengthen security measures.

Demi Reeves
Seattle Housing Authority
101 Elliott Ave., W
Seattle, WA 98119-4236

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



43 SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY TRANSITIONING FROM UPCS-NSPIRE

Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) faced the challenge of transitioning from UPCS to NSPIRE inspection standards, requiring both adaptation to new regulations and adjustments to its internal inspection approach. Led by the Housing Quality team, SHA restructured its annual inspection program and developed processes and procedures to guide teams in meeting updated standards. By leveraging real-time inspection data, SHA refined preparation strategies, ensuring accuracy and compliance. These innovations enhanced inspection precision, tenant safety, and agency-wide performance, demonstrating excellence in housing quality.

Francisco Flores
Seattle Housing Authority
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44 BREWSTER'S APARTMENTS

Cook Inlet Housing Authority's (CIHA), Brewster's Apartments is a twenty-one-unit building located in the city's neighborhood of Mountain View, recognized by demographers as America's most diverse community. For decades, the site was home to Brewster's Clothing & Footwear, owned by Anchorage entrepreneur Charles Brewster. Shortly after Mr. Brewster's passing, CIHA purchased the property for a future affordable housing development. During the early development process, CIHA named the development as "Brewster's Apartments" to honor Mr. Brewster. Brewster's Apartments provides homes close to retail, grocery stores, businesses, parks, community gardens, and a local library.

Sezy Gerow Hanson
Cook Inlet Housing Authority
3510 Spenard Rd., Ste 201
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(907) 793-3775



45 CH'BALA CORNERS II

Ch'bala Corners is a multi-generational development located in mid-town Anchorage. This is the second phase buildout of the site. Phase I is comprised of three buildings and offers a mix of senior housing and family housing, bringing 48 new, affordable rental apartments to the community. Phase II adds 38 units in a mix of duplex, fourplex, and 8-plex buildings. The development also includes Ush Park, offering green space for relaxing and a play structure for kids. Ch'bala is the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina word for spruce tree. Spruce trees were an important resource for the

Dena'ina, providing food, fuel, building materials for shelter and supporting the animals of the region.



Nominated for Excellence

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Ch'bala Corners II

Submitted for NAHRO Awards of Merit
 April, 2025

Ken Graham Photography (Exteriors)
 Cassey Bradley, CIHA (Interiors, Duplex)

Banner Photo: Ch'bala Corners II Townhouses



46 CITY OF PHOENIX AND SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Through innovative partnerships with local school districts, the City of Phoenix is making a significant impact in creating new affordable housing on unused school property. Over the past two years, the City has participated in three land transactions with two local school districts that will support the creation of more than 300 new affordable housing units. The unique land transaction structure involved in these projects includes participation by the City of Phoenix, the school district, a local industrial development authority, and affordable housing developers, is a testament to our commitment and significant progress in creating affordable housing opportunities.

Sonya Blanco
City of Phoenix Housing Department
 251 W Washington St., 4th Fl
 Phoenix, AZ 85003-2245
 602-534-1065



47 MILAGRO ON ORACLE

Milagro on Oracle is a transformative public-private partnership affordable housing development located in the Miracle Mile National Historic District. The City of Tucson's first major initiative under the City's non-profit El Pueblo Housing Development, and the City's first state Low Income Housing Tax Credit project in 10 years, Milagro on Oracle provides 63 affordable senior housing units for Tucsonans. The development incorporates the preservation and adaptive reuse of two historically significant motor courts alongside the addition of a new four-story building, fostering community connections through shared spaces including community gardens, walking paths, and a multipurpose center.



Nominated for Excellence

Vanessa Gonzalez
City of Tucson Housing and Community Development Department
 310 N Commerce Park Loop
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48 INDEPENDENCE PLAZA RESTORE-REBUILD PROJECT

Independence Plaza’s Restore-Rebuild project preserves 120 units of affordable housing for vulnerable families by replacing an expiring local subsidy with 120 Project-Based Vouchers. Independence Plaza addresses the severe cost burden and homelessness crisis facing elderly and extremely low-income households so that residents pay no more than 30% of their income on rent. With staff from Data/Policy, Housing Programs, Housing Development, and legal counsel, The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda executed “the first acquisition-only Restore-Rebuild (formerly Faircloth to RAD) Conversion” in the nation, according to HUD’s Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Conversion Commitment.



Sarah Raskin
 Housing Authority of the City of Alameda
 701 Atlantic Ave.,
 Alameda, CA 94501-2161
 (510) 747-4360



49 USING A LINE OF CREDIT, GRANTS & FNMA MTEB TO PRODUCE PERMANENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) closed a \$70.8 million first-of-its-kind financing on March 19, 2024, to support 459 permanent supportive housing units for unhoused families across Los Angeles. The properties, acquired using \$117 million in state grants and \$68 million in credit, will remain affordable for 55 years. HACLA leveraged Fannie Mae’s Multifamily Tax-Exempt Bond program, achieving a

record-low interest rate and an AAA credit rating. The City contributed \$9.5 million, and Section 8 vouchers will fund operations. This milestone reflects HACLA’s commitment to innovative financing and addressing homelessness in Los Angeles.



Nominated for Excellence

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 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
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50 USING RATED BOND & HUD’S RESTORE REBUILD TO CONVERT CLASS A APT. TO PERMANENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) successfully closed \$138.5 million in Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds to acquire the 335-unit Clarendon Apartments in Woodland Hills CA, expanding affordable housing in a high-opportunity zone. Funded by Senior Series 2024A bonds rated ‘A-’ by Fitch, 2024B unrated subordinate bonds, HACLA equity, and a philanthropic loan, the transaction overcame rating challenges, secured favorable rates, and set a precedent for future acquisitions. With 50 units under HUD’s Restore-Rebuild Program (fka “Faircloth-to-RAD”), HACLA adds critical, deeply affordable housing while demonstrating its financial strength and commitment to housing solutions.



Nominated for Excellence

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51 **BROOKLYN BASIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Oakland Housing Authority’s Paseo Estero, Vista Estero, Foon Lok West and Foon Lok East (collectively known as Brooklyn Affordable) are an integral part of Brooklyn Basin, a new master-planned community along Oakland’s waterfront that will provide over 3,700 homes for people of all ages and income levels within a vibrant, 64-acre, mixed-use district. Brooklyn Basin is the result of a highly collaborative public/private partnership whose vision began in 2004 in Oakland, CA.

Dominica Henderson
 Oakland Housing Authority
 1619 Harrison St., Ofc 2
 Executive Director Office
 Oakland, CA 94612-3307
 (510) 587-2149



52 **SANTA ANGELINA SENIOR**

Orange County’s soaring land prices and limited land frequently stymie the region’s efforts to meet an urgent need for affordable housing. National Community Renaissance and the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles are shattering these barriers. At Santa Angelina Senior – a 65-apartment affordable housing community built on church-land in the affluent, service-rich region of north Placentia – residents, including formerly homeless individuals, thrive amid beautiful homes and peerless onsite support programs designed to help them age with dignity nestled within a supportive faith-based community. This bold partnership is inspiring a national movement that is accelerating solutions to the housing crisis.



Nominated for Excellence

William Diepenbrock
 National Community Renaissance
 9692 Haven Ave., Ste 100
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53 **AFFORDABLE WORKFORCE HOUSING IN HEART OF DOWNTOWN SANTA BARBARA**

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara developed 821 State St., a first-of-its-kind project in the center of downtown Santa Barbara, with 14 affordable apartments. The adaptive reuse conversion – or rebuild from commercial retail to workforce homes – is one the Authority is hoping will serve as a blueprint to tackle Santa Barbara’s housing crisis. The design used the building’s existing infrastructure to create the new apartment living spaces with the original storefront for commercial uses. This adaptive reuse development exemplifies “community innovation” through creative

financing, utilizing public/private partnerships, and serving mixed income residents.

Jennifer Schipa
 Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara
 808 Laguna St.,
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101-1590



54 THE IVES

Foothills Regional Housing’s The Ives provides 50 one-bedroom homes for individuals earning below 60% of the Area Median Income, with half of the units reserved as supportive housing for Jefferson Center for Mental Health clients who have experienced homelessness. The building features natural materials, abundant natural light, high-end finishes, and dedicated space for onsite supportive services. The Ives represents the first phase of a broader redevelopment effort along a key corridor in Wheat Ridge, Colorado—an initiative that will ultimately deliver approximately 250 affordable housing units, improved pedestrian and vehicle safety, and a revitalized, modern streetscape. This project is closely aligned with city priorities and responds directly to the evolving needs of the community.

Ashley Noel
 Foothills Regional Housing
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 Wheat Ridge, CO 80033-2166
 (720) 413-7669



55 BRIDGE TO HOME: TENANT SUBSIDY PROGRAM – KEEPING RESIDENTS HOUSED THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT

The Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA), through an innovative departmental collaboration, launched Bridge to Home—a resident support program designed to offset rent increases at two PCHA senior properties. This proactive initiative is entirely funded by PCHA and aims to prevent displacement caused by rising rental costs. By reinvesting a portion of rental income from these properties, Bridge to Home offers financial assistance to qualifying senior residents who face rent increases they cannot afford. This “bridge” enables residents to age in place with dignity, avoid lease terminations and evictions, and maintain housing stability—while also supporting the long-term financial sustainability of PCHA’s housing portfolio.



Nominated for Excellence

Elise Minkoff
 Pinellas County Housing Authority
 11479 Ulmerton Rd.,
 Largo, FL 33778-1602
 727-443-7684



56 HOOSIER HOMES PROGRAM

The Hoosier Homes Program, sponsored by the Fort Wayne Housing Authority (FWHA), provides down payment assistance and affordable mortgage options for low- and moderate-income Indiana homebuyers. The program offers both new and repeat homebuyers access to forgivable down payment assistance, competitive interest rates, and mortgage products for existing homes, as well as for constructing or renovating a home. FWHA enforces program guidelines, determines underwriting criteria, and facilitates borrower education. The agency partners with Eustis Mortgage to services home loans.



Jessica Matuska
 Housing Authority of the City of Fort Wayne
 7315 Hanna St.,
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57 PEMBERTON TOWNHOMES

Lexington Housing Authority’s (LHA) successful partnership with the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government provided housing for homeless families in Lexington during 2024. With funding provided by the city, LHA developed Pemberton Townhomes. The \$1.4 million endeavor utilized LHA owned property and the city’s investment in HOME ARPA dollars and the allocation of state and local fiscal recovery dollars for the construction of the 5 townhomes. With referrals through the city’s coordinated entry program for homeless families who meet 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) for 4 of the units and 50% of area median income instead in 1 unit, LHA provides case management for participants and pays for all utility services.



Dana Tincher
 Lexington-Fayette Urban County
 Housing Authority
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 Lexington, KY 40505-1428
 (859) 281-5062



58 CYPRESS RIVER LOFTS

The Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish’s Cypress River Lofts is a unique addition to South Baton Rouge, offering modern, affordable living in the heart of an ongoing revitalization. As part of the River South initiative that began with a 2002 HOPE VI grant, the 19-unit, mixed-income community features first-floor ADA-accessible units, energy-efficient design, and a mural celebrating neighborhood resilience. This intimate, industrial-style community fosters a vibrant atmosphere and provides families and professionals with a quality live, work, and play environment.



Miranda Thomas
 Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish
 4731 North Blvd
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 (225) 223-5067



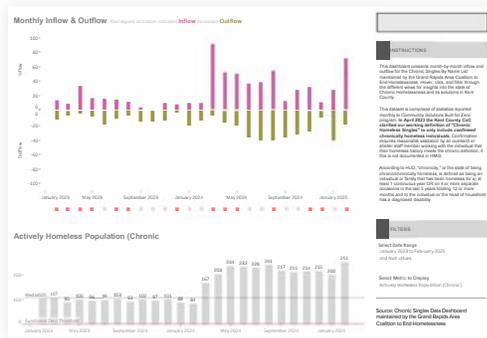
59 “100 IN 100 KENT COUNTY” COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Grand Rapids Housing Commission has partnered with the Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness, City of Grand Rapids and Kent County leadership, United Way, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, The Salvation Army and other organizations, businesses and volunteers in a “100 in 100 Kent County” campaign with a goal of finding permanent housing for 100 unhoused individuals in 100 days, focusing on people experiencing chronic homelessness. 100 in 100 Kent County launched September 1, 2024, and as of April 10, 2025, had succeeded in finding permanent housing for 90 individuals, with 58 additional households in the process of securing housing.



Nominated for Excellence

Joyce Smith
Grand Rapids Housing Commission
 1420 Fuller Ave., SE
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 (616) 235-2600, ext. 1114



60 CHASKA YARDS PROJECT

The Carver County Community Development Agency’s (CDA) Chaska Yards project will include four homes affordable to households at or below 80% of area median income through the CDA’s Community Land Trust program, an affordable homeownership program of the CDA.



Nominated for Excellence

Allison Streich
Carver County Community Development Agency
 705 N Walnut St.,
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 (952) 556-2803

Small Agency



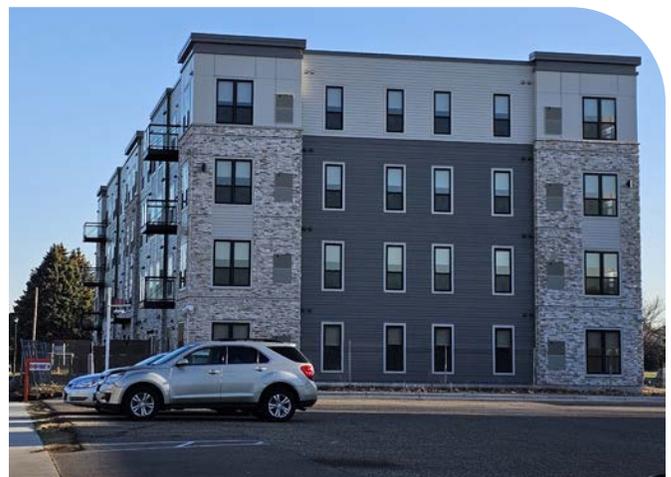
61 BLUESTEM APARTMENTS RESTORE REBUILD

Bluestem Apartments, the first Restore-Rebuild development in Minnesota, utilized the Washington County Community Development Agency’s (CDA) Faircloth Units to create new Project Based Rental Assistance units. This new construction development provides 36 homes affordable for seniors 62 years and older earning 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and 16 homes affordable at 60% AMI. The Washington County CDA partnered with a local nonprofit developer/owner to leverage scarce federal housing resources to stabilize housing costs for our lowest income elders.



Nominated for Excellence

Melissa Taphorn
Washington County Community Development Agency
 7645 Currell Blvd
 Woodbury, MN 55125-2256
 (651) 202-2821



62 TRINITY APARTMENTS

The Missoula Housing Authority’s Trinity Apartments is comprised of 202 affordable rental homes, workforce housing, permanent supportive housing, and a satellite clinic hosted by a federally qualified health center. Completed in 2023, this property sits on two scattered-site parcels in the Westside neighborhood in Missoula, Montana. These mixed-income homes serve people earning 30% to 70% Area Median Income. Blue Heron Place (permanent supportive housing), Maple Street Flats (30-70% area median income) and the Watershed Clinic are located on Mullan Road and Westside Place (30% - 70% AML apartments and rowhouses) is located on Cooley Street.



Nominated for Excellence

Sara Stout
Missoula Housing Authority
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 (406) 549-4113



63 DICK SCOTT MANOR PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VETERANS

The Housing Authority of the City of Reno (RHA) owns and operates, the self-developed Dick Scott Manor 12-unit complex completed in Aug. 2024. Dick Scott Manor is Permanent Supportive Housing for veterans experiencing, or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. Veteran Affairs Sierra Nevada Health Care system provides supportive services through the HUD-VASH program. The \$5 million project was built on a small infill site donated to RHA by the City of Reno. The RHA brought financing together with a \$3 million grant from the City of Reno through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) recovery funds, a \$200,000 Home Depot

Foundation grant dedicated to veterans’ projects, and a \$1.6 million ARPA Home Means Nevada Initiative recovery grant from the State of Nevada.



Nominated for Excellence

Jerri Williams Conrad
Housing Authority of the City of Reno
 1525 E 9th St.,
 Reno, NV 89512-3012
 775-842-0753



64 APPLICATION WALK-THROUGH VIDEO

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority receives many applications to its various housing services every day. Thanks to our website’s inquiry submission form, we can connect with and answer questions from applicants, residents, voucher holders, and more. Through analysis of these inquiries, we noticed a need for easier and more detailed application instructions. Therefore, our Marketing and Communications department collaborated with members from the Policy team to create an application walkthrough video. The step-by-step instructions, and ease of access, can help to take down barriers people may face when submitting an application.



Nominated for Excellence

Julia Wright
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority
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 (216) 348-5911



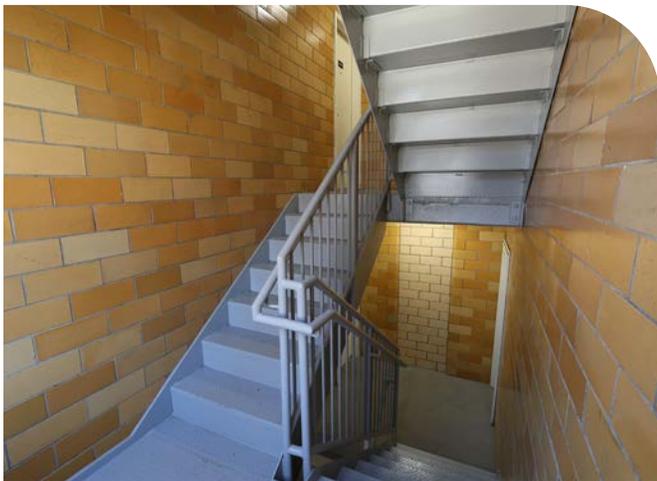
65 RADON GRANT AND OLDE CEDAR LEAD REMEDIATION

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) continued to prioritize resident health in 2024 through its modernization and development efforts. The agency secured funds for radon testing and mitigation across 2,677 units, and lead remediation at Olde Cedar. CMHA conducted extensive testing that revealed elevated radon in King Kennedy, which was promptly mitigated. Lead risks were also addressed through demolition, rehabilitation, and removal at various sites, including a \$5 million grant for Olde Cedar.



Nominated for Excellence

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 (216) 348-5911



66 SCHOLAR HOUSE

The Cuyahoga Housing Metropolitan Housing Authority is honored to be a part of the innovative and inspiring affordable housing development, The Louise C. Stokes Scholar House. Named after Louise C. Stokes, the mother of the late Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes and the late Ohio Congressman Louis Stokes, this housing opportunity offers a two-generation approach to student families with the goal of breaking the cycle of poverty and changing the trajectory of the lives of the families served. The site pairs affordable housing through the use of project-based vouchers with onsite supportive services and high-quality day care

provided by community partners within Cuyahoga County's resource network.



Nominated for Excellence

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67 ZMHA HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

In 2023, the Zanesville Metropolitan Housing Authority partnered with the Zanesville Housing Development Corporation, a local nonprofit to create a Homeownership Program. The program markets and sells 73 single family LIHTC homes located in Zanesville, Ohio to the tenants that are currently renting the homes. All applicants are first-time home buyers and homes are sold at a discounted price. If the tenant requires financing, the program helps the tenant secure a 15 year, fixed rate first mortgage with a local community bank. The program also provides a forgivable second mortgage to help the tenant reach the purchase price.



Nominated for Excellence

Kelly Haist
Zanesville Metropolitan Housing Authority
 407 Pershing Rd.,
 Zanesville, OH 43701-6871
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68 HATTIE REDMOND

Home Forward and Urban League of Portland partnered on the development of Hattie Redmond Apartments, a 60-unit new construction project serving chronically homeless Black/African Americans located in the historic Albina neighborhood. Home Forward was the lead developer and now provides property and asset management services. Urban League of Portland originated the vision and now provides culturally specific on-site resident support services. With an 82% retention rate in its first couple of years, the project is a testament to the power of partnerships, creative funding approaches, and centering equity to achieve community sustainability.



Kitty Miller
Home Forward
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Portland, OR 97204-3598
(503) 802-8300

69 LIBERTY PLACE

The Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation’s Liberty Place is a 32-unit development consisting of all 1-bedroom units dedicated to housing veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness who participate in the HUD-VASH program. This property encompasses a collaborative journey, from securing funding and partnerships to creating a welcoming space. The highly diverse partners include the local housing authority, local government, the VA,

federal funding, state funding, as well as community organizations. Liberty Place is now being used as a model for replication in creating housing solutions for veterans in need with strategies for building effective partnerships to support similar projects in other communities.



Marisa Moazen
Knoxville’s Community
Development Corporation
901 N Broadway St.,
Knoxville, TN 37917-6663
(865) 403-1150



70 NEW HOPE HOUSING SAVOY

New Hope Housing Inc. Housing Savoy transforms an underutilized Houston office park into a vibrant, 120-unit affordable housing community for families and individuals. Completed in 2023, the project leveraged \$33.5 million in public-private funding and features 100% masonry construction, National Green Building Standard certification, and Energy Star appliances. A central courtyard, onsite family library, and community-focused amenities promote long-term resident success. Savoy is a model of thoughtful design and sustainable housing development in one of Houston’s most culturally diverse neighborhoods.



Kayla Semien
New Hope Housing Inc.
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71 WALTER I.M. HODGE PAVILION

Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion, located in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, sustained severe damage from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, leaving over 100 units uninhabitable until construction began in 2022. The Virgin Islands Housing Authority assembled a team, to achieve rehabilitation of the property funded through HUD’s RAD program, LIHTCs, and disaster recovery funding. Awarded the bronze certification under, the completed project included replacing all building components, enhancing safety and storm resilience, and providing modernization and sustainability upgrades, all while maintaining affordability for existing and new residents and implementing a wellness program, Bright Path.



Nominated for Excellence

Sherry Melvin
Virgin Islands Housing Authority
9900 Oswald Harris Ct
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(340) 778-8442
Nominated for Excellence



72 ONE UNIVERSITY

Fairfax County Dept. of Housing/Community Development’s (FCRHA) One University consists of 240 affordable homes adjacent to George Mason University (GMU). It was co-developed with 333 units (798 beds) of market-rate student housing and accommodates households with incomes of 30-60% area median income. One University is the first Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) converted property in the nation to obtain HUD approval for demolition and

redevelopment. The original townhouses owned by Fairfax County Redevelopment Housing Authority were replaced, which quintupled the density of affordable housing on the land. The FCRHA maintains a ground lease for the GMU student housing building which generates more annual income and is subject to real estate taxes, which adds revenue back into Fairfax County.



Nominated for Excellence

Allyson Pearce
Fairfax County Dept. of Housing/
Community Development
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(703) 246-6033



73 EVERGREEN BRIGHT START

In 2024, through a unique funding stack, collaboration with a private developer, and partnerships with numerous dedicated civic and community organizations, Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA) acquired a brand-new 30-unit apartment complex in downtown Bremerton, Washington. This project, called Evergreen Bright Start, serves one of the most underserved populations in Kitsap County: young adults ages 18-24 who are exiting foster care or facing homelessness. BHA owns and operates the building while providing rental assistance. On-site service providers Kitsap Mental Health Services and Coffee Oasis offers support and resources to help residents thrive independently in their new homes.



Nominated for Excellence

Katie Sharp
 Bremerton Housing Authority
 600 Park Ave.,
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74 FINANCIALLY SELF-SUSTAINING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Housing Authority of Thurston County’s property strategy is to provide an attractive option for neighbors who are not fortunate enough to have some form of scarce rental assistance. Congress nationally funds the Housing Choice Voucher at a level that, at best, serves 25% of income-eligible households. The Authority developed an acquisition and development strategy to provide affordable housing with minimal reliance on governmental capital programs and no reliance on those programs for operation, maintenance, or capital improvements. The Authority’s Olympia Crest apartment community and its final expansion completed in 2024 highlight the success of this strategy.

Craig Chance
 Housing Authority of Thurston County
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 Olympia, WA 98507-1638
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75 SALISH LANDING APARTMENTS

Salish Landing is Seattle Housing Authority’s latest redevelopment in the West Seattle neighborhood. This 100% affordable project has 82 units spread across various levels of affordability. The project provides fourteen 3-bedroom units to serve low-income families in the community. A focus on sustainability and energy efficiency played a significant role in the development and construction of the project.



Nominated for Excellence

Karlee Keyser
 Seattle Housing Authority
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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

76 AFFORDABLE AUTO LOAN PROGRAM

The Affordable Auto Loan Program, created by the Huntsville Housing Authority (HHA) and Redstone Federal Credit Union, offers low-interest auto loans to low-income residents who lack affordable transportation. Participants can also refinance high-interest loans, lowering some rates from 19% to 5%. With no downpayment required, loans are available to individuals making under \$50,000 annually. As of February 2025, 31 participants have been approved, totaling over \$350,000 in low-interest loans. The program, designed to support upward mobility, has an approval rate of over 90%.



Nominated for
Excellence

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Huntsville Housing Authority
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77 THE LAST FRONTIER HOUSING INITIATIVE

The Last Frontier Housing Initiative drives development activity and building capacity in communities sorely lacking both. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) approached the communities it is serving as a full-service partner and developed a plan to approach the communities on a government-to-government basis with direct awards. AHFC can now deploy the resources, in partnership with the communities, and work with them instead of simply funding them.



Nominated for
Excellence

Daniel Delfino
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
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78 HOUSING PHOENIX PLAN UNIT GOAL

The Phoenix Housing Department has met and exceeded the Housing Phoenix Plan's 50,000-unit goal five years ahead of schedule. To date, the city has created or preserved more than 53,000 units. In 2020, the Phoenix City Council approved the Housing Phoenix Plan, the city's first housing policy plan, with an ambitious goal of creating or preserving 50,000 housing units by 2030 through the implementation of nine policy initiatives designed to increase housing supply. The Housing Phoenix Plan's policy initiatives assisted the city in reaching this goal by updating zoning codes, streamlining processes, identifying new funding sources and focusing on preservation efforts.

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79 FREEDOM TREE PARK, JORDAN DOWNS REDEVELOPMENT

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles' Freedom Tree Park is part of Jordan Downs' redevelopment, transforming public housing into a diverse community. Phase 1B added 135 housing units and 1.25 acres of public space. The park commemorates community strength through an oak tree symbol that once stood as a gathering place. It celebrates gathering and play through natural elements—vegetation, wood, stone, and water. This natural focus brings biodiversity to the area, serving

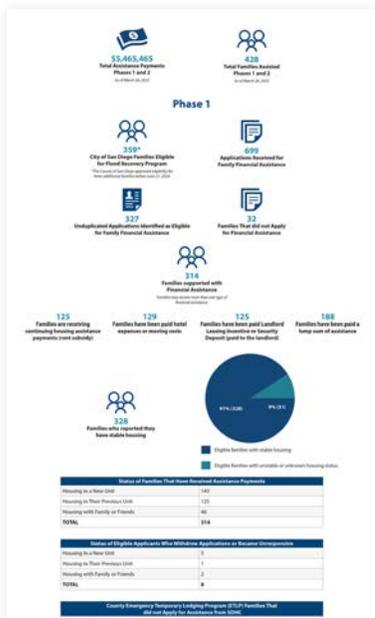
as an educational resource for nearby schools. Over 35 trees were planted as part of the Transformative Climate Community Initiative.

Geoffrey Moen
 Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
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80 FLOOD RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS

After catastrophic flooding on January 22, 2024, that upended the lives of hundreds of San Diego households, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) quickly mobilized to provide an essential bridge of assistance for affected families until the County of San Diego’s emergency resources became available. SDHC’s efforts provided emergency temporary lodging for 313 flood-impacted households. With funding subsequently allocated by the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego, SDHC also launched the Flood Recovery Program for Displaced Residents, which disbursed more than \$5.4 million to assist more than 400 flood-impacted families as of March 26, 2025, to obtain stable housing.

Scott Marshall
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81 HSG. AUTH. OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL WITH HARTFORD HEALTHCARE LAUNCH NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC

The Housing Authority of the City of Bristol has partnered with Hartford Healthcare, one of Connecticut’s largest and most respected healthcare networks, to establish a new clinic aimed at enhancing the well-being of local residents. This initiative underscores a shared commitment to improving access to quality health care for individuals and families within the community.



Nominated for Excellence

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 Housing Authority of the City of Bristol
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82 EDITH SPURLOCK SAMPSON AND SHEFFIELD RESIDENCES

The Chicago Housing Authority celebrated renovations at the Edith Spurlock Sampson Senior Apartments and the grand opening of the new Sheffield Residences. Together, Edith Spurlock Sampson and the Sheffield Residences are a mixed-income, affordable, multi-generational, transit-oriented development providing 485 apartments in the heart of Lincoln Park.



Nominated for Excellence

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84 PEARL PLACE APARTMENTS

Winnebago County Housing Authority’s Pearl Place Apartments represents a rich tapestry of community heritage, resilience, and innovation. This historic site originated in 1893 as the Garfield School, expanded with significant additions over the years, including the 1916 Belvidere High School and the 1939 WPA-funded Auditorium & Gymnasium. Though it narrowly escaped demolition in 1990 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997, its journey exemplifies the challenges and triumphs of adaptive reuse.



Nominated for Excellence

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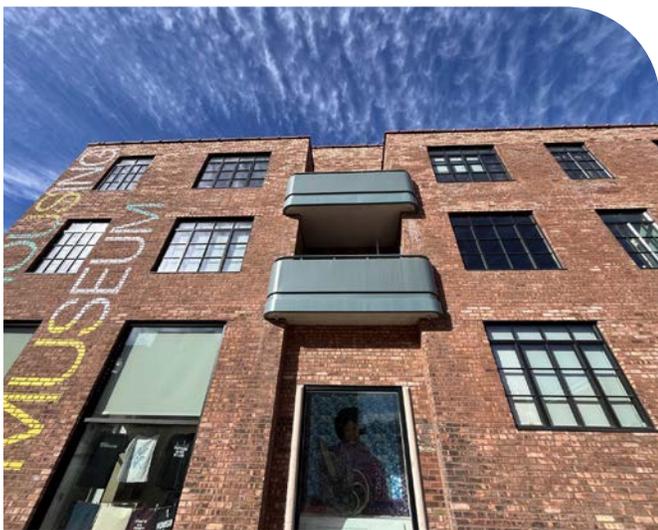
83 NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING MUSEUM

The National Public Housing Museum and Apartments is a mixed-use development containing 15 residential units in the northern portion of the building with the museum located in the southern portion of the building. The residential mix contains five Chicago Housing Authority Project Based Voucher units and 10 affordable units.



Nominated for Excellence

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85 POWER THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AT CYPRESS PINCHBACK

Partners Southeast, the development arm of the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority, partnered with Entergy Louisiana to install backup generators at the Cypress Pinchback senior community, helping seniors stay safe during power outages and extreme weather. Through a public-private partnership, the effort delivers reliable energy and strengthens the resilience of one of Baton Rouge’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. The generators also support the larger grid during peak demand, making Cypress Pinchback

a model for protecting health, safety, and dignity in storm-prone communities.



Nominated for Excellence

Miranda Thomas
 Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish
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86 LAUREL/JONES CO VISITORS CENTER

The Laurel/Jones County Visitors Center, led by the Laurel Housing Authority, revitalized one of Mississippi’s oldest public housing sites to create a hub for tourism, culture, and economic development. It offers visitors centralized access to local attractions, history, and businesses, while supporting artists and entrepreneurs. Featuring interactive digital tools, exhibits, and preserved housing from the 1940s, the center blends heritage with innovation. Since opening, it has boosted tourism, increased business revenue, and strengthened community ties—becoming a model for leveraging tourism to drive local growth and pride.



Nominated for Excellence

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Small Agency



87 RTA MURAL AND WOODHILL STEERING COMMITTEE

Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority leads Buckeye-Woodhill’s revitalization via a Choice Neighborhoods grant, and by fostering resident-driven governance with partners like The Community Builders and Burten Bell Carr Development, Inc. A two-tiered structure—Steering Committee and Engagement Team—ensures that community voices shape redevelopment. The Engagement Team builds connections, while the Steering Committee guides key decisions about housing and safety. Some of the program’s accomplishments include mural projects and resident-focused policies. The model is scalable, sustainable, and it prioritizes community input over technical complexities.



Nominated for Excellence

Julia Wright
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88 GAIL'S GOATS: THE HACP'S PARTNERSHIP WITH ALLEGHENY GOATSCAPE

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh has partnered with Allegheny GoatScape since April 2023 to address the overgrowth of knotweed in the Bedford Dwellings area behind the Bedford EnVision Center and ABK Early Childhood Development Center in Pittsburgh's Hill District. The overgrowth was previously addressed by maintenance using weedwhackers, lawn mowers, and other methods which proved to be ineffective and time consuming. This process also created sound pollution and was disruptive to the ABK Early Childhood Development Center, located within the Bedford EnVision Center. Allegheny GoatScape and its herds have been able to remove the overgrowth in a span of two days.



Nominated for Excellence

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89 FROM EMANCIPATION TO INNOVATION: THE REVIVAL OF ROSEWOOD COURTS

The Housing Authority of the City of Austin's Rosewood Courts, the first public housing for African Americans in the U.S., is being reimaged as Pathways at Rosewood Courts: a 184-unit community that blends historic preservation with modern, accessible design. Eight 1939-era buildings are being restored, while new construction adds central air, ADA-compliant access,

and public amenities. Anchoring the site is the WOW Center —“What Once Was”— a storytelling hub run by e4 Youth to honor East Austin's Black legacy through virtual reality exhibits, art, and oral histories. Together, these elements create a space that remembers the past and uplifts the future.



Nominated for Excellence

Nidia Hiroms
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Children of Rosewood Courts - 1942



Children of Rosewood Courts - 2022

PROJECT DESIGN

90 CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENT DESIGN PROTECTS LIVES AND PROPERTY

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara (HASBARCO) is an early adopter of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to increase safety by lowering crime by integrating discreet physical changes in and around housing sites. CPTED changes include planting native cacti and sticker bushes as barriers that convey a more welcoming presence than chain-linked fences. Inconspicuous surveillance cameras can detect trespassers on HASBARCO grounds. All CPTED renovations complemented the surrounding areas and inspired peaceful behavior.



Kelsie Schroll
Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara
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91 ESCALANTE MEADOWS GAVE A COMMUNITY JOBS AND DIGNITY

From demolition in 2022 to completion in 2024, Escalante Meadows has become a model for employment of Section 3 and local workers and a picture of elegance from the sidewalk to within the 80

units and community center. The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara submits this New Project Design Project to convey the many ways a construction site can revitalize a local economy, and the resulting building can elevate the comfort and aesthetic appeal of affordable housing in a famously affluent region of the West Coast.

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92 SAFE, MODERN APARTMENTS AWAY FROM A DANGEROUS RIVERBED ENCAMPMENT

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara went beyond the basics to house the homeless with creature comforts and GreenPoint Rated sustainability features. The new Cypress and Seventh affordable housing development is located in the Central Coast town of Lompoc, California. Its 15 one-bedroom units have heat-saving insulation and cool-shaded awnings, pass the latest fire and seismic building code regulations, Crime Protection Through Environmental Design recommended trash enclosures and landscaping, and the sunlit architecture and décor indicative of the Southwest.

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93 NICKERSON GARDENS AND IMPERIAL COURTS TRASH ENCLOSURES

To address the problems created by unsightly trash buildup at Nickerson Gardens and Imperial Courts, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles identified grant funding and implemented a solution for the litter abatement challenges. The project was the installation of cinder block trash enclosures, carefully placed to improve ADA access and to house the trash bins which was funded by the Clean California Local Grant Program. The Clean California grant also funded the Green Ambassador Program to lay the foundation for litter abatement behavioral change. The 32 Green Ambassadors from Nickerson Gardens and Imperial Courts reflect a cross-section of residents and spearhead campaigns and outreach events to clean up both sites.

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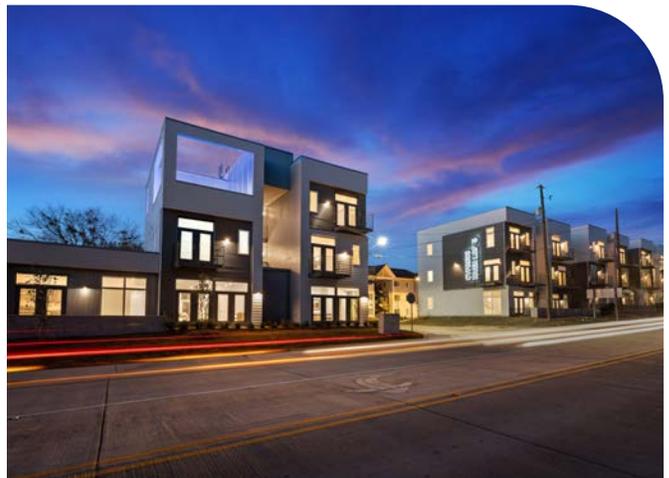


94 CYPRESS RIVER LOFTS

Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish’s Cypress River Lofts is a unique addition to the South Baton Rouge community, offering modern, affordable living in the heart of ongoing revitalization. As the third phase of the River South initiative, this 19-unit development builds on a transformation that began with the 2002 HOPE VI grant. With HOME and CDBG-DR funding, it features ADA-accessible design, energy efficiency, upscale finishes, and a mural that celebrates Louisiana culture—reimagining affordable housing through placemaking, resilience, and opportunity.



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95 FAIRMOUNT COTTAGE HOME PARK

Fairmount Cottages is a unique 18-unit project constructed by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth in 2023. The site consists of 18 individual small homes, half of which are 1-bedroom and half 2-bedroom. The units are 100% electric, with in-floor radiant heat as the main heat source. The units also boast amenities that promote efficiency such as ductless heat pumps for heating and cooling as well as hybrid heat pump water heaters. The units sit on a 2.7 acre site with the front doors all facing inward and connected by sidewalks and bridges (with wildlife friendly, solar trail lighting), a unique design creating a sense of community that was made possible by a 2020 zoning code change in the City of Duluth.



Jacob Morgan
Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth
PO Box 16900
Duluth, MN 55816-0900
(218) 529-6325



96 SKYRIDGE FLATS SENIOR APARTMENTS

Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth constructed Skyridge Flats, a new, 70-unit senior apartment building. The principal funding source was housing infrastructure bonds from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. The building was designed by LHB architects following the traditional neighborhood plan in place in the Harbor Highlands neighborhood in Duluth’s hillside. The building is 100% affordable (50% area median income or less), and seven of the units are reserved for veterans transitioning out of homelessness. Highlights include an on-site tenant service coordinator; underground, heated parking;

exterior, wildlife-friendly lighting; and a 40 kW solar array on the roof.



Nominated for Excellence

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Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth
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97 LAUREL/JONES CO VISITORS CENTER

The Laurel/Jones County Visitors Center, led by the Laurel Housing Authority, revitalized one of Mississippi’s oldest public housing sites to create a hub for tourism, culture, and economic development. It offers visitors centralized access to local attractions, history, and businesses, while supporting artists and entrepreneurs. Featuring interactive digital tools, exhibits, and preserved housing from the 1940s, the center blends heritage with innovation. Since opening, it has boosted tourism, increased business revenue, and strengthened community ties—becoming a model for leveraging tourism to drive local growth and pride.



Nominated for Excellence

Ailrick Young
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Small Agency



98 CEDARWOOD HOMES

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) awarded Cedarwood Homes as part of the Project-Based Voucher and Gap Financing Program in 2020 as a means of adding innovation to their roster of existing affordable housing programs intended to increase affordable housing in the Pittsburgh housing market. This project was made possible by HUD’s Moving to Work (MTW) Local Non-Traditional Development Program, which allows MTW agencies like the HACP to create innovative solutions to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing by utilizing rental assistance and other available resources. The Gap Financing Program was a 2019 NAHRO Award Recipient.



Chuck Rohrer
Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
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99 LETSCHE SCHOOL APARTMENTS

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) awarded Letsche School Apartments (Project) as part of the PBV and Gap Financing Program in 2021 as a means of adding innovation to their roster of existing affordable housing programs intended to increase affordable housing in the Pittsburgh Housing Market. This project was made possible by HUD’s Moving to Work (MTW) Local Non-Traditional Development Program, which allows MTW agencies like the HACP to create innovative solutions to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing utilizing rental assistance and other available resources. The Gap Financing Program was a 2019 NAHRO Award Recipient.



Chuck Rohrer
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412 Boulevard of the Allies
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100 100 LABOR

100 Labor is a part of the Victoria Commons redevelopment site, located in San Antonio, Texas. Owned by Opportunity Home San Antonio, this site is situated in a rapidly expanding and economically thriving region. The 100 Labor Project was initiated as part of Opportunity Home San Antonio’s masterplan for the area to offer affordable housing options in response to escalating property values and market demands fueled by rapid economic and demographic growth. The Lavaca Neighborhood District location,

directly across from Hemisfair, is a major downtown civic and commercial area that provides access to major public amenities.



Joshua Moreno
Opportunity Home San Antonio
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(210) 477-6200



101 SNOWDEN LIVING

Opportunity Home San Antonio brought Snowden Living, a 135-unit affordable housing project for seniors 62 years plus, to the heart of the Medical Center neighborhood in San Antonio, TX. The buildings nestle with adjacent properties and a natural drainage channel. Goals for the development included designing elements where residents can live and thrive independently. Amenities include nature trails, computer center, beauty salon, game room, pet grooming room and dog park, beach front swimming pool, community kitchen, community garden, and many more. The development was designed to feel welcoming to visitors, and provide a sense of community for residents, with sustainability being critical.



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102 THE BRISTOL AT SOMERSET

The Bristol at Somerset Apartments is a step forward in fulfilling Opportunity Home San Antonio’s mission of providing affordable housing to San Antonio residents. It is a new construction project which ensures that 100% of the 348 units leased will be offered at 60% adjusted median income or below and must accept Section 8 vouchers. The project is a welcome addition to a market that has a significant need for more affordable housing. The new community offers exceptional indoor/outdoor resident amenities designed to be more attractive and efficient than comparable affordable housing in the area. As a testament to the success of this project, it was awarded the Build San Antonio Green Multifamily Property of the Year.



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103 WESTSIDE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE

The Opportunity Home San Antonio’s Westside Reinvestment Initiative (WRI) is a modern single family affordable homes project. The Villas at Fortuna subdivision is located in the heart of Westside San Antonio. The project consists of 28 single-family homes. These two- to three-bedroom, single-story modern homes range in size between 1,101 to 1,309 square feet. WRI prioritizes the needs of moderate-income first-time homebuyers, one of few in the City, providing high quality affordable single-family housing. Opportunity Home San Antonio committed to keeping the sales prices static despite rising construction costs in order to provide the affordability necessary for individuals and families that are priced out of the general market.



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104 85 NORTH

Provo City Housing Authority’s 85 North is designed to meet the unique needs of adults on the autism spectrum and elderly tenants, offering a safe, inclusive, and stimulating environment. Each space is thoughtfully crafted to promote comfort, security, and community. Key features include sensory-friendly elements, accessible layouts, and common areas like a game room, library, and sensory room for relaxation and engagement. Supportive services ensure residents receive the assistance they need to thrive, fostering a sense of belonging and independence in a welcoming, empowering home.



Nominated for Excellence

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Provo City Housing Authority
688 W 100 N
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105 GRANGER – MODERNIZING AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Housing Connect’s Granger Apartments, a 24-unit former public housing development located in northern West Valley City, Utah, has undergone a comprehensive rehabilitation to modernize and preserve vital affordable housing opportunities for low-income families. Built in 1974 and owned by Housing Connect, this redevelopment was made possible through Section 18 of the Housing Act of 1937, allowing for essential improvements to the property.



Nominated for Excellence

Janice Kimball
Housing Connect
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South Salt Lake, UT 84115-4434
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RESIDENT AND CLIENT SERVICES

106 IN-HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

The Auburn Housing Authority offers free transportation to our families due to the generous donation of a 15-passenger van “gifted” by the Church of the Highlands. The In-House Transportation Program was implemented to alleviate the burden on our project-based voucher residents and tenant-based voucher participants who do not have dependable transportation. This program afford our residents transportation to various places, including but not limited to, seeking employment opportunities, doctor’s appointments, pharmacies, grocery stores, work, youth recreational activities, school pick up and drop off, and other transportation needs within the Auburn city limits.



Nominated for Excellence

Sharon Tolbert
Auburn Housing Authority
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107 EMPOWERING FAMILIES THROUGH HOMEOWNERSHIP IN THE WIREGRASS REGION

Dothan Housing and Wiregrass Habitat for Humanity partnered to redefine homeownership opportunities in Alabama’s Wiregrass Metropolitan Area. Addressing systemic barriers to economic independence, two families transitioned to homeownership through Habitat’s rigorous application process and Dothan Housing’s Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership

Program. Leveraging Dothan Housing’s Family Self-Sufficiency resources and Habitat’s expertise, this collaboration empowered families to achieve economic stability and showcased an innovative model for addressing the affordable housing crisis.



Nominated for Excellence

Tera Wells
Dothan Housing
1001 Montana St.,
Dothan, AL 36303
(334) 796-2355



108 RESIDENT SERVICES

Fort Payne Housing Authority launched a series of Resident Services Program under the new administration of Executive Director, Stacy Parris. This is a holistic program designed to empower and educate families of both the public housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs. This is an entirely new program for the Fort Payne Housing Authority and the City of Fort Payne.

Stacy Parris
Housing Authority of the City of Fort Payne
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110 PHXHOUSING CONNECT PROGRAM

The PHX Housing Connect Program, launched in May 2020, works to close the digital divide for the City of Phoenix Housing residents by providing devices, connectivity, and digital literacy training. The program has distributed 3,337 devices, connected 3,746 units to free internet, and opened two Digital Access Centers, called The Hives. The program supports educational and economic opportunities by addressing technology access needs and enhancing digital skills for residents of affordable and senior housing communities.

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 City of Phoenix Housing Department
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 602-534-1065



111 NORTH STARS YMCA TEEN TECH CENTER AT THE CARMELITOS PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Los Angeles County Development Authority's North Stars YMCA Teen Tech Center at the Carmelitos Public Housing Development (Carmelitos) Community Center is a state-of-the-art facility. The Center provides resources & opportunities to local teens by offering access to technology, creative art programs, and interpersonal career-building skills. The Center aims to empower young individuals, both Carmelitos residents and youth living in the broader North Long Beach area, by providing hands-on experience in digital media, podcasting, fashion design, film production, and

109 HUNTSVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY (HHA) YOUTH BASKETBALL AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Huntsville Housing Authority's Youth Basketball and Education Initiative supports adolescents in Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Communities by combining sports with education, life skills, and personal growth. Weekly practices build discipline, teamwork, and critical thinking, while partnerships with local organizations provide tutoring, financial literacy, mentorship, and college prep. The program helps break cycles of poverty and truancy, guiding youth toward positive choices. As a result, participants have improved their school grades, behavior, and engagement in academics and extracurriculars, with many reaching honor roll status and exploring STEM and sports activities.



Nominated for Excellence

Sakeenah Bowden
 Huntsville Housing Authority
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music creation. The intended outcomes include the creation of a pipeline for future careers in creative and technological industries.

Michelle Mitchell
Los Angeles County Development Authority
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112 YOUTH CENTER

On October 24, 2024, a ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the official opening of a new Youth Center in Brawley, the result of a meaningful collaboration between the Brawley Police Department and the Imperial Valley Housing Authority. This center was developed with the shared vision of creating a safe, supportive, and empowering space for the city's youth. The primary mission of the Youth Center is to build stronger connections between young residents and law enforcement through structured mentorship programs and community engagement activities. The center aims to guide local youth toward positive life choices while fostering mutual understanding and trust.



Nominated for
Excellence

Kirk Mann
Imperial Valley Housing Authority
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113 HOUSING DISCRIMINATION FORUM

The Housing Discrimination Forum, organized by the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, is a community-driven event bringing together tenants, landlords, housing advocates, and legal experts to address discrimination in housing. Through interactive workshops, panel discussions, and resource-sharing, the Forum raises awareness, provides legal guidance, and promotes fair housing practices. By fostering open dialogue and collaboration, the Forum empowers residents, protects vulnerable populations, and encourages equitable access to housing opportunities in Santa Cruz County.



Nominated for
Excellence

Jacob Waller
Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz
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114 HOUSING MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz, in partnership with the Conflict Resolution Center, provides free housing mediation services to Housing Choice Voucher tenants and landlords. Mediation offers a neutral third-party facilitator to help resolve disputes before they escalate to legal action. By fostering communication, the program promotes housing stability, prevents evictions, and improves tenant-landlord relationships. Accessible and voluntary, the Housing Mediation Program provides a peaceful, collaborative path to conflict resolution, benefiting the broader Santa Cruz County rental community.

Jacob Waller
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115 PROJECT: SILVER BELLS

Project: Silver Bells is a Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz initiative bringing festive joy and support to low-income seniors in agency-owned and managed properties across Santa Cruz County. Launched in 2023, the program provided care packages to over 100 seniors in its first year and expanded to 150 senior adults in 2024. Through donations and outreach, Project: Silver Bells fosters connection and is “delivering joy, one home at a time.”

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116 FROM HOMELESSNESS TO HOPE: YEAR ONE AT BUENA TIERRA

Buena Tierra is a transformative Permanent Supportive Housing community developed by the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara through the State of California’s Project Homekey program. It serves individuals who were formerly homeless, offering 60

fully furnished studio units paired with intensive, on-site services. Buena Tierra empowers residents to move from crisis to stability through individualized support plans, life skills development, and economic self-sufficiency programming.

Kelsie Shroll
Housing Authority of the County
of Santa Barbara
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117 SAFE (SAFETY AWARENESS FOR EVERYONE) PROGRAM

During the pandemic, the lack of access to emergency preparedness resources for residents became evident and was particularly acute among limited English proficient residents and the elderly or otherwise vulnerable. In response, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) created the Safety Awareness for Everyone (SAFE) program which recognizes that emergency preparedness is key in protecting residents and staff and in safeguarding valuable assets. Through partnerships with emergency management teams who provide training and education opportunities, OHA equips its communities with life-saving information, all while optimizing existing resources without requiring additional staff or funding.

Anna Kaydanovskaya
Oakland Housing Authority
1619 Harrison St., Ofc 2
Executive Director Office
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118 WHITNEY YOUNG HEAD START

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino has partnered with San Bernardino County Preschool Services to provide on-site Head Start services at several of our affordable housing communities. Head Start is a free school-readiness program for children ages three to five in low-income families, focusing on early childhood education, health, nutrition, and family wellbeing. Our latest collaboration brings the Head Start program to our 296-unit Maplewood Homes affordable housing community in San Bernardino. The Whitney Young Head Start program also serves toddlers aged 24 to 36 months through the Early Head Start program, which prepares them for the Head Start program.



Nicole Beydler
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119 BELDEN VILLAGE COMMUNITY GARDEN

A community garden at a San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) affordable housing property for seniors with low income has been a catalyst for more than healthy fruits, vegetables and herbs for residents. The Belden Village Community Garden has helped SDHC to deliver additional services to residents, such as computer skills classes and health screenings, and led to more engaged senior residents. With guidance from volunteer master gardeners, residents learn gardening skills, spend time outdoors, and participate

in community activities, such as the regular harvest parties where neighbors get together to taste the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor.



Nominated for Excellence

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120 WESTWOOD ARTS AND EATS – A COLLABORATION BETWEEN JOBS PLUS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY

In 2024, Denver Housing Authority’s Jobs Plus Program partnered with local nonprofit Youth Employment Academy to provide 22 young adults from Westwood Homes and the surrounding area with education and paid internships in the creative industries. They learned basic job readiness skills while working with Denver artists to increase their creative skills and learn about urban farming and community gardens. The internship culminated in a community celebration featuring chalk art, mural unveiling which enhanced the community garden spaces, and food access resources. 100% of participants completed the program, increasing their creative skills and farming knowledge.



Nominated for Excellence

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Denver Housing Authority
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121 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY'S CREATIVE REAL-WORLD TRAINING AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Youth Employment Academy (YEA) was commissioned by several organizations, including the Denver Housing Authority, to design signage, stickers, logos, and murals. This partnership provided young adults with the opportunity to showcase their artistic talents by creating designs that would be displayed across Colorado, on buildings and in stores. Through this project, YEA interns not only gained valuable work experience, but also saw their ideas come to life in public spaces, strengthening their connection to the local community. To further their education, interns were exposed to a range of professions, from architects to marketing professionals, helping to strengthen their career exploration.



Nominated for
Excellence

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122 HSG. AUTH. OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL WITH HARTFORD HEALTHCARE LAUNCH NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC

The Housing Authority of the City of Bristol has partnered with Hartford Healthcare, one of Connecticut's largest and most respected healthcare networks, to establish a new clinic aimed at enhancing the well-being of local residents. This initiative

underscores a shared commitment to improving access to quality health care for individuals and families within the community.



Nominated for
Excellence

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123 WATER ROBOTICS PROGRAM

Bristol Housing Authority and Bristol Boys & Girls Club at the Cambridge Park Clubhouse have launched a Water Robotics Program that gives youth experience in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) by designing, building, and programming underwater robots. This innovative program addresses the gap in STEAM access for underserved youth by combining technical skills with real-world environmental applications. Led by Dr. Corey Nagle, the program culminated in a community showcase where students demonstrated their innovations.

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124 BRIDGE TO HOME: TENANT SUBSIDY PROGRAM - KEEPING RESIDENTS HOUSED THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA), in a departmental collaboration, created a resident program to off-set rent increases in 2 PCHA senior properties: Bridge to Home. Bridge is a proactive and 100% PCHA funded initiative to prevent displacement due to rising rental costs. By allocating revenue from PCHA's rental income on these senior properties, the Bridge to Home provides financial assistance to qualifying residents experiencing a rent increase they cannot afford. This "bridge" allows residents to age with grace, remain in their homes, avoid lease terminations, eviction proceedings, and maintain housing stability—while ensuring the long-term financial health of PCHA's portfolios.



Nominated for Excellence

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125 CRYSTAL LAKES MANOR FOOD PANTRY: BOUNTIFUL RESOURCES

Pinellas County Housing Authority's (PCHA) Crystal Lakes Manor – a 263 unit, low-income residential community serving senior citizens, successfully reinstated its on-site food pantry, which had previously been shut down during COVID. This initiative was led by tenants, demonstrating a strong sense of ownership. The food pantry has since become a vital resource for addressing food insecurity and supporting the well-being of residents. This project also serves Lakeside Terrace – a neighboring 110 unit property housing low-income individuals and families, including children. The food pantry ensures that senior citizens and multigenerational households benefit from improved food access.



126 PROJECT SAFE: SAFETY, AWARENESS, FIRST RESPONSE, EMPOWERMENT

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) believes that investing in staff training on crisis intervention is the most powerful way a housing authority can protect its employees and residents, strengthen its operations, and demonstrate commitment to a safe workplace. Within PCHA's culture of learning, Project SAFE (Safety, Awareness, First Response, Empowerment) was generated to not only invest in PCHA employees but in the welfare of our residents by providing training on Narcan administration, Self Defense, Active Shooter, Human Trafficking, and Hurricane Preparation and Response. Trainings on these critical topics builds confidence, saves lives, and reinforces a culture of readiness.

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127 VASH: WE SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) is proactively and innovatively addressing Pinellas County ranking as 1st in Florida for the number of homeless unsheltered Veterans: 292. PCHA is exhibiting best practice in providing quality service to Veterans through 1) innovative partnerships, 2) development strategies, as well as 3) positive coordination with the HUD-VASH Section at VA Bay Pines Health Care System. PCHA serves on Bay Pines Veterans Collaborative, is a founding member of Friends of Veterans and Drug Court, opened Valor Preserve with a preference for VASH Vouchers and Veterans, and has built a strong PCHA VASH Department that is responsive to each Veteran that they serve.



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128 WELLNESS AT HOME: A MONTH OF HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND COMMUNITY

Wellness Month at Pinellas County Housing Authority's Landings at Cross Bayou is a vibrant celebration of health and positivity. Residents and staff received daily emails featuring uplifting quotes, affirmations, and exercises. The month was filled with themed events like Sports Day, Meditation Day, and Reading Day, encouraging community engagement and mindfulness. The initiative significantly boosted morale, fostering a supportive environment and inspiring individuals to prioritize self-care and well-being.

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129 BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

In February 2020, Tampa Housing Authority's senior apartment, JL Young Gardens, hosted its 1st Annual Black History Celebration. The development of the program was initiated by a senior living in the community along with Elderly Services Staff. Each year the celebration has an impactful and creative program that celebrates black culture during the month of February. The program includes Speakers, African Drumming, Intergenerational Youth Presentations, Black History Facts, Black History Trivia, Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing", Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" Speech, Poetry, and Fashion Show. This event allows seniors to learn, engage, and inspire others.



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130 BUILDING FAMILY FINANCIAL SKILLS

Tampa Housing Authority's Building Family Financial Skills provides services to parents and caregivers residing in Hillsborough County. Funded by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County, the program utilizes "Your Money, Your Goals" curriculum in a four-session workshop. Workshops are held at Housing Authority properties and other facilities. Individuals receive counseling services and related support to assist with housing stability efforts. The program focuses on supporting individuals with resources in saving, income, bills, debt, and credit report/scores. Individuals are provided with a Financial Toolkit to manage personal finances and become financially stable.



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131 JL YOUNG GOT TALENT SHOW

Tampa Housing Authority's senior apartment, JL Young Gardens, offers residents meaningful opportunities to interact and engage in various events and activities including the successful First Annual JL Young's GOT Talent Show held on July 31, 2024. Twenty residents competed with talents ranging from painting, poetry, singing, dancing, and musical performances. JL Young's GOT Talent contestants not only benefitted from preparing and participating, but they also entertained and inspired the 76 seniors in attendance. We had four judges. The judges scored each participant, and the top three highest scores were crowned winners, but everyone enjoyed this vital social connection.

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132 YOUTH TUTORING

Many at risk youth are academically changed as a result of the COVID pandemic. The Tampa Housing Authority partnership with PVP Consulting LLC. has a proven track record of providing comprehensive youth tutoring services over the course of two summers and two school years. The program operates Monday-Thursday, 2-6 PM at Oaks at Riverview Community Center after school and over the summer. The tutoring services are provided by certified educators and college-age tutors, with the goal of enhancing students' understanding and skills in Math, Science, Literacy, and History.



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133 HACC BRIDGING THE CHILDCARE GAP INITIATIVE

The Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC) launched the HACC Bridging the Childcare Gap Initiative to address the increasing need for childcare providers and affordable childcare. To combat these issues, HACC collaborated with a community partner to support its clients. Partnering with the Child Care Resource Service (CCRS), HACC provided no-cost virtual workshops on finding low-cost childcare and accessing resources. A streamlined referral process was also created, allowing HACC participants to become licensed childcare providers at no cost, with CCRS covering all licensing expenses.



Nominated for
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134 HACC CAREER AND RESOURCE CONNECTION INITIATIVE

The Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC) seeks to assist residents who struggle to find employment by connecting them with resources to help them reach their career goals. HACC held a virtual and in-person job fair with over twenty employers and community resources present.

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135 HACC RESUME TO REALITY

The Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC), in collaboration with East Illinois Worknet, launched the “Resume to Reality Series” to empower unemployed HACC participants and those seeking career advancement. This no-cost workshop series provided critical skills in career exploration, resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and workplace etiquette. In addition, a streamlined referral process to Career Coaches at East Illinois Worknet was created for additional support. Delivered virtually by East Illinois Worknet and coordinated by HACC staff, the program aimed to break down barriers to employment and foster professional development within the community.

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136 HACC YOUTHBUILD EMPOWER ED PROJECT

The HACC EmpowerEd Project is a collaborative initiative between the Housing Authority of Champaign County’s (HACC) YouthBuild program and the University of Illinois College of Education. The project provides personalized tutoring and academic support to YouthBuild participants and HACC housing clients, helping them achieve educational goals, build confidence, and prepare for future success. By connecting aspiring educators with local youth and

adults, EmpowerEd fosters growth, empowerment, and community uplift through education.



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137 CHA AND FUTURE FOUNDERS “BE YOUR OWN BOSS” PROGRAM

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) offers a robust selection of paid summer youth opportunities. In Summer 2024, the agency and its program partners provided 2,240 CHA youth, ages 13-24, with paid work and skill development opportunities. Participants earned nearly \$2.8 million while gaining valuable exposure to career and education pathways, which enhance their future employment prospects and earning potential. One example of these diverse opportunities is the “Be Your Own Boss” entrepreneurship program, created in partnership with Future Founders.



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138 THE DIGITAL INCLUSION TEAM

The Digital Inclusion Team at the Chicago Housing Authority works to erase the digital divide by providing residents with the opportunity to gain digital skills, access digital devices, and connect to affordable internet.

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139 TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES EVICTION PREVENTION PROGRAM

In 2024, Housing Authority of the City of Fort Wayne launched its Homeless Prevention Program in partnership with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, with the support of a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families insert acronym (TANF) grant. The TANF Short-Term Homeless Prevention Program provides immediate support to families who are facing homelessness or are at risk of eviction. By addressing immediate needs and offering up to four months of support, the program stabilizes families, preventing homelessness and promoting long-term housing security—ensuring children are cared for in stable environments and enhancing family well-being.



Jessica Matuska
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140 YOUTHBUILD

The Fort Wayne Housing Authority's YouthBuild Program provides out-of-school and at-risk youth and young adults, ages 16 to 24, with education, hands-on construction training, and leadership development. In partnership with The Literacy Alliance and Hayes & Sons, participants work toward achieving General Education Diploma/High School Equivalency credentials and National Center for Construction Education and Research certification, while gaining work experience and practical knowledge through construction projects. The program also offers mental health support, career guidance and job placement.



Nominated for Excellence

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141 THE STRATEGIES TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY WORKSHOPS: EMPOWERING FSS PARTICIPANTS TO MEET THEIR GOALS.

The Kokomo Housing Authority’s Strategies to Self-Sufficiency Workshops empower Housing Choice Voucher and public housing participants enrolled in the Family Self-Sufficiency program with tools for financial independence, career growth, homeownership, and personal development. Through expert-led sessions, participants gain actionable knowledge on budgeting, credit, homebuying, stress management, and more. This innovative initiative fosters confidence, accountability, and goal setting, resulting in increased economic stability and self-sufficiency among attendees.



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142 HEALTH INSURANCE NAVIGATION DAY: ANSWERS, AWARENESS, AND EDUCATION FOR RESIDENTS

The Housing Authority of the City of Richmond (HACR) was concerned that with pandemic-era continuous Medicaid coverage coming to an end, and redeterminations re-commencing, that our residents might lose coverage due to lack of understanding or awareness of the redetermination process. By hosting on-site health insurance navigation information sessions in partnership with Claim Aid, MDWise, Affiliated Service Providers of Indiana, Inc, and State Health Insurance Assistance Program at our public housing complexes, the HACR connected residents face-to-face with representatives of these navigation agencies, raised awareness of their free services among residents, and of the need to complete the redetermination process.

Lindsay Freed
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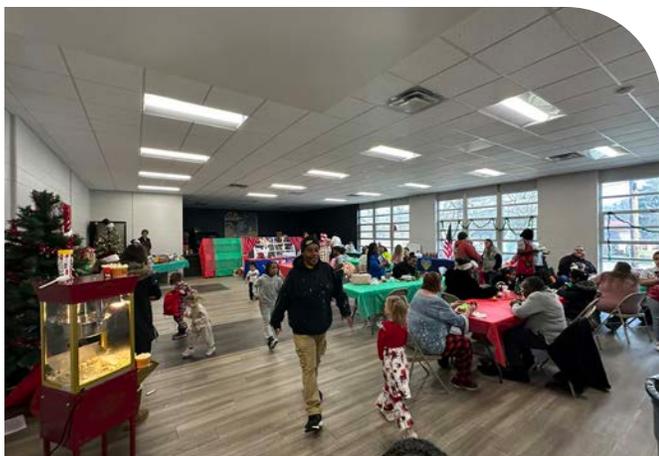


143 HOLIDAY GIVEAWAYS AND SANTA VISITS: CONNECTING RESIDENTS DIRECTLY WITH SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL SERVICES

The Housing Authority of the City of Richmond (HACR) strives to design and implement programs that bring existing, free, local resources directly to our residents in warm, personable ways that promote resident engagement. In 2023, we hosted the first annual Holiday Turkey Giveaway and the first Santa Visits the Housing Authority, two events where each HACR-assisted family attending received tickets for a holiday meal kit or brand new gifts after speaking face-to-face with representatives of local service agencies (health insurance navigators, continuing education resources, case management, and more) hosting information tables on-site at the event. In 2024, these events served over 150 residents, and we are excited to grow them!



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144 STUDENT POWERED HUNGER RELIEF

The Lexington Housing Authority's Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency Program (ROSS) has partnered with Campus Kitchen at the University of Kentucky (CKUK) since 2018. CKUK is a student-powered organization dedicated to reducing food waste and eliminating food insecurity. They recover food and produce from campus dining facilities, groceries, and farmers markets to prepare healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals for those experiencing hunger and isolation. Weekly, freshly prepared meals are delivered to public housing offices for distribution or taken to homes when travel is problematic. In the 2023-2024 academic year alone, 34 households in the ROSS program received 430 free meals.

Dana Tincher
Lexington-Fayette Urban County
Housing Authority
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145 FALL FESTIVALS

The Lansing Housing Commission (LHC) held two fall festival events in September, 2024. Over 200 families were invited to an afternoon of fun, entertainment and resident service promotion and information. LHC hired a minority food truck owner for the evening and each person was given a piece of BBQ chicken or hot dog, cornbread/rolls, baked beans, coleslaw and potato salad at no cost to them. LHC community partners were on hand at individual tables to provide information to the attendees on the various programs and services available to residents year-round. The evening was staffed by property management and more than 20 volunteers from LHC's administrative office.

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146 FRIENDS & CO. COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: WORKING TO END LONELINESS AND ISOLATION AMONG OLDER ADULTS

The St. Paul Public Housing Agency launched a partnership with Friends & Co. to promote social connection and volunteer opportunities for older adults. Staff distributed materials door-to-door to promote Friends & Co. services – Coffee Talk, Phone Companions, and Visiting Companions. Friends & Co. hosted Community Conversations at four hi-rises. Community Conversations is a discussion series focused on topics related to aging, social connection,

and social isolation. Community Conversations provides a platform for older adults to connect, share experiences, and provide feedback. Overall, 151 residents participated in at least one discussion across the four sites.

Alicia Huckleby
St. Paul Public Housing Agency
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147 WI-FI READY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL ST. PAUL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY HI-RISE TENANTS

On February 21, 2024, the St. Paul Public Housing Agency (St. Paul PHA) became the first housing authority in Minnesota to collaborate with an internet service provider to provide pre-installed connectivity for low-income households, thanks to a partnership with Comcast/Xfinity. The St. Paul PHA and Comcast/Xfinity entered into 11-year agreements for Comcast/Xfinity to begin installing Wi-Fi modems in all units at each of the St. Paul PHA's 16 hi-rise buildings. Installations began in May 2024 to be completed within one year. The St. Paul PHA and Comcast/Xfinity are proud that the tenants who call a St. Paul PHA hi-rise home can now have the same Wi-Fi access as anyone else.

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148 LINCOLN LEARNERS: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM FOR GRADES K-8

The Housing Authority of the City of Goldsboro's after-school program for children in grades K-8 focuses on science, engineering, and art. The program offers a safe place for children to learn, have fun, and explore science, technology, and art interactively. The program is free to all children living within the public housing community. It is run by staff and volunteers who understand the need for children to be safe while learning and engaging in activities they enjoy but do not always have access to.



Nominated for
Excellence

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149 SUMMER DESIGN PROGRAM

The Greensboro Housing Authority (GHA) has a vision to reimagine and transform six of its most underutilized community centers into innovation hubs – spaces for youth to explore, engage, create and innovate! To gain direct input from young residents, GHA

launched the Summer Design Program. This six-week initiative rotated across six GHA sites and introduced youth ages 8–18 to architecture, engineering, and construction through workshops, field trips, and mentorship. Participants engaged with real spaces, offered design ideas, and learned skills like sketching, model-building, digital design, and site planning.



Nominated for
Excellence

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150 HERITAGE PARK RELOCATION

In its first relocation effort in 15 years, the Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) had to invent a new process and program to relocate 100 households in 12 months. Given ambitious goals and a strong set of values, RHA took on the challenge systematically and innovatively. The goals included minimum friction and 100% timely relocation without issuing any 90-day notices. Key strategies ranged from creating a new relocation team consisting of staff with a demonstrated history of respectful service to creating a new project-based voucher program that provided high-quality brand-new housing opportunities to the majority of residents. To date, 96% of residents have moved in eleven months.



Nominated for
Excellence

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Raleigh Housing Authority

151 FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM GRADUATE DREAM TEAM

In 2024, The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) introduced the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program Graduate Dream Team. This initiative was created to provide CMHA FSS graduates with a platform to network with, support, and encourage each other in current and future endeavors. This discussion group is an avenue that offers FSS graduates' connections to necessary community resources. Also, graduates can give back to the community by mentoring current FSS participants which increases FSS enrollments and webinar participation.



Nominated for
Excellence

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152 MOMMY MATTERS

Many low-income public housing teen mothers and their children face difficult circumstances. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) actively seeks to support young mothers in their efforts to become self-sufficient, delay subsequent childbearing, and promote awareness of child development to break the cycle of poverty. By providing stable housing and other supportive services, CMHA aims to equip teenage mothers with the skills and knowledge necessary to become more effective parents, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for both mothers and their children.



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153 PARTNERSHIP WITH OLIVET HOUSING

Many low-income public housing teen mothers and their children face difficult circumstances. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) actively seeks to support young mothers in their efforts to become self-sufficient, delay subsequent childbearing, and promote awareness of child development to break the cycle of poverty. By providing stable housing and other supportive services, CMHA aims to equip teenage mothers with the skills and knowledge necessary to become more effective parents, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for both mothers and their children.



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154 PCORI DENTAL PROGRAM WITH CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority partnered with Case Western Reserve University to address oral health disparities among seniors. The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute program provides dental services, including screenings and treatment, to those lacking access or facing transportation barriers. The study aimed to educate residents on the importance of oral health and encourage them to prioritize their oral hygiene. Follow-up care was provided to assess effectiveness.



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155 PEER-TO-PEER DIGITAL INCLUSION

The evolution of Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Digital Navigator program into a peer-to-peer tech support system bridges the digital divide by offering personalized support to residents. Resident navigators provide technology help, digital literacy training, and affordable internet access, impacting 1,369 individuals. They’ve distributed 341 devices

and delivered 15 classes, empowering communities through peer-to-peer support. By addressing internet access, device affordability, and skill development, these navigators unlock opportunities in education, employment, and healthcare, fostering a digitally inclusive environment.

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156 QLESS TICKETING SYSTEM

To address lengthy wait times for visitors at the main campus, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority implemented the QLess virtual queuing system, to enhance lobby efficiency and improve the visitor experience. Data from November 2023 to January 2025 shows high usage in Lobby 2 and Housing Choice Voucher Program Participant queues. QLess’ 13 queues streamline operations, and benefit both visitors and employees by reducing wait times and improving service delivery. This highly replicable solution offers a model for other housing authorities seeking to modernize their operations.



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157 FOOD INSECURITY & RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

With food insecurity on the rise and the ambition of one resident, the Housing Authority of the County of Beaver spearheaded a weekly food bank and strategy.. This food bank has not only provided food for our residents but is available to the entire Ambridge community. This initiative has also provided several residents with the opportunity to volunteer and receive rent credit each month.

Kathryn Walter
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158 ELDER ABUSE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Staff of the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), including members of the Legal Department, made several presentations to Resident Advisory Councils at different public housing communities on Elder Abuse Prevention and Education. HACLA has many seniors living in its public housing communities, and thus we felt that this would be valuable resident education. We recognized that elder abuse could become a housing issue, as the abuse might result in somebody losing their affordable housing. Because our mission is to keep people housed to the extent possible, we saw preventing elder abuse as something in HACLA’s interest as well as in the interest of our tenants.

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159 DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

Tech2Elevate and the Beaver County Housing Authority have collaborated for the past year to provide our residents with on-site digital coaches. The coaches are trained and trusted guides that will work one on one with the residents, teaching digital skills and providing information on an array of topics related to working on a PC, laptop or cellular device. They have also provided many of our residents with free desktop computers.



Nominated for Excellence

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160 CARPENTRY CO-OP PROGRAM

In collaboration with Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh launched a Carpentry Co-Op program in March 2024 designed to provide senior-level high school students in the technical trades program with valuable hands-on experience in the field of carpentry. This initiative offered students a unique opportunity to gain practical, real-world training and develop skills that will benefit their future careers.



Nominated for Excellence

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161 JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ELDERLY PROGRAM (JOE)

Administered by J.A. Machuca & Associates, Inc. and funded by the Puerto Rico Public Housing Authority, the JOE Program offers healthy elderly residents the opportunity to work two hours daily maintaining the office spaces within their own housing developments. In return, participants receive a monthly stipend of \$200 for a period of three months, after which a new resident is selected. The program benefits four elderly residents per development each year. By engaging in meaningful work, participants not only contribute to their communities but also experience a sense of purpose, improved self-esteem, and supplemental income to help meet their financial needs.



Nominated for Excellence

Jose Angel Machuca
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162 COVENTRY BOOKWORMS

Reading is the heart of education offering countless benefits, bringing comfort, adventure, and joy to people of all ages. The love of reading is a true gift, one we were privileged to share this year with our residents through a collaboration with our local library. With the addition of a new mobile library, Coventry Library and Coventry Housing Authority embarked on a literary journey that led to weekly visits and blossomed into the Coventry Bookworms and Coventry Kids Book Club.



Nominated for Excellence

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Small Agency



163 JEOPARDY TRIVIA GAME SHOW COMPETITION BETWEEN THE RESIDENTS

In Fall 2023, West Warwick Housing Authority (WWHA) hosted a Jeopardy themed Trivia Game Show. WWHA has two properties. Residents from each site were grouped into teams of three people. Every week the teams in each building competed against their peers in their building to answer questions like the quiz show Jeopardy. The team with the most points at the end of the game was declared the winner and moved on to the next round. Each week, one team at each site was eliminated. Eliminations continued throughout the competition until a champion was named. Finally, the two championship teams at each site faced off for a final competition awarding the grand champion title.



Nominated for Excellence

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Small Agency



164 SERVICES AND SUPPORTS AT HOME (SASH): HELPING RESIDENTS ACCESS SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO AGE IN PLACE

In May 2023, the West Warwick Housing Authority adopted the Services and Supports at Home (SASH) program. The SASH Mission is to coordinate and deliver person-centered, evidence-based care and support to people where they live, helping them to improve or maintain their quality of life so they can live out their days in the location of their choosing. The SASH team works collaboratively to assess the needs of the SASH participants. SASH uses the data obtained during the assessment process to identify potential areas of need or improvement to establish a healthy living goal. With SASH assistance, the individuals work to improve health and wellness, allowing them to age in place.



Nominated for Excellence

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Small Agency

165 ROSS INITIATIVES – HEELS, TIES, & PEARLS

Columbia Housing is proud to support the ROSS initiatives titled Heels, Ties & Pearls, which are designed to empower residents on their journey to self-sufficiency. These initiatives connect residents with valuable resources through a series of targeted workshops. Section 3 employers have participated by conducting on-site interviews, leading to direct job placements. Financial literacy sessions have equipped residents with the tools to create budgets and improve their credit scores. Through partnerships with organizations like Toastmasters, residents have also developed public speaking skills. Additionally, several participants have been hired as Home Health Aides by employers in the healthcare sector.



Nominated for Excellence

Taleshia Stewart
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166 SENIORS HEALTHY COOKING CLASS

Columbia Housing partnered with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, now renamed the South Carolina Department of Health to start a Healthy Cooking class to educate and improve chronic health conditions within the senior population. This is a 6 week program and all participants must complete the course in order to successfully receive a certificate of completion, a cookbook, measuring cup and other paraphernalia.



Nominated for Excellence

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167 RADON TESTING & MITIGATION PROGRAM

In 2022, HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes awarded a \$600,000 grant to Rock Hill Housing Authority (RHHA) to conduct radon testing and mitigation within their housing units. Rock Hill was one of nine public housing agencies across the nation selected to receive funding through the Radon Testing & Mitigation Demonstration Grant Program. Radon testing was performed across the RHHA portfolio, totaling 464 units and six administrative buildings. RHHA developed a public awareness campaign to inform residents of the health risks associated with radon exposure and the importance of testing. Radon testing was performed and mitigation efforts completed on RHHA properties in 2023.



Nominated for Excellence

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168 PATHWAYS PROGRAM

The Knoxville's Community Development Corporation's Pathways Program empowers youth ages 16–24 through a 5-week series focused on education, workforce development, professionalism, and community service. Recognizing the many barriers young people face, especially around misinformation or fear of losing public assistance due to earned income or scholarships, the program intentionally integrated education on income exclusions into every aspect of its structure. Youth gain access to colleges, job programs, and mentorship, with income exclusion information shared to ease fears about losing benefits. Outcomes include FAFSA completion, job training enrollment, and increased confidence.



Nominated for Excellence

Marisa Moazen
Knoxville's Community Development Corporation
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169 BABY BASICS: PROVIDING ESSENTIAL RESOURCES TO NEW FAMILIES

The Tennessee Valley Housing Services partnered with Helping Mamas Knoxville (HMK), the region’s only diaper bank, to provide essential baby supplies to over 50 families in our developments. This collaboration directly addresses unmet needs for diapers, wipes, formula, and other baby necessities, significantly enhancing the well-being of new mothers and serving 140 children.



Sarah Gulley
 Tennessee Valley Housing Services
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 (423) 586-5115 ext. 8024



170 COMMUNITY ROOTS: CULTIVATING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THROUGH URBAN GARDENING

The Tennessee Valley Housing Service’s Community Roots garden cultivates community engagement and improves resident health. This resident-led initiative provides access to fresh produce, promotes healthy lifestyles, and fosters a stronger sense of community, yielding approximately 300 pounds of produce, benefiting 115+ residents.



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171 EMPOWERING NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETHER

The Tennessee Valley Housing Service’s (TVHS) Empowering Neighborhoods Together is a program created to help improve communication and share information with residents from community partners and professionals as well as from the TVHS maintenance department. Local partners share their expertise on a variety of important topics such as conserving energy, information about radon gas, and pest control. Other areas explored are registration for school, community clubs, and activities for youth. Through this collaborative endeavor, we will build stronger relationships between the local community, TVHS, and its residents by providing knowledge and skill to help support residents.

Jeff Green
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172 NOURISHING NEIGHBORS

The Tennessee Valley Housing Services partners with Avenue Dream Center to deliver monthly food boxes to over 200 vulnerable Section 8 households lacking food security or transportation. This vital initiative combats food insecurity, expanding across five counties and even assisting flood victims. The program has improved food security for 225+ individuals.



Nominated for Excellence

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173 HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM (HOMEOWNERSHIP 101 EDUCATIONAL COURSE)

Led by Lacey Wunderlich, the Housing Authority of the City of Abilene’s Homeownership 101 Educational Course offers low-income replace acronym with Housing Choice Voucher participants a life-changing journey toward homeownership. This five-week course not only educates families on every step of buying a home—from budgeting and credit to choosing a mortgage—but also ensures they’re ready for the lifelong commitment of homeownership. By teaching post-purchase essentials like maintenance and savings, Lacey’s program empowers families to build lasting stability. With free meals, childcare, and expert guidance, this course doesn’t just change lives—it gives families the keys to their future.



Nominated for Excellence

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174 HEALTH AND FITNESS, LOS VECINOS OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

The Harlingen Housing Authority (HHA) saw the need to keep our public housing residents engaged in a

healthy lifestyle and connect with each other. The HHA was motivated to install these types of exercise equipment for those who may not have the resources to join a gym or other fitness facilities. We envisioned a practical way to stay active, with outdoor fitness equipment. Public housing residents can now enjoy the benefits of strength training, cardiovascular exercise, and more, all while enjoying the fresh air and beauty of nature. This encourages opportunities to build relationships and create a sense of community.



Nominated for Excellence

Maria Prieto
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175 THE WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST

The Harlingen Housing Authority (HHA), in partnership with the Harlingen Affordable Housing Corporation and the Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District implemented this program to motivate young artists and help them develop their creative skills. The HHA saw an opportunity to provide low-income families with the tools and guidance to increase their confidence in learning the arts. Certain art materials and equipment costs may be too high for families to purchase. The Family Learning Centers provide all art materials, and the children learn to appreciate the experience and the freedom to express themselves through art.



Nominated for Excellence

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176 CAREER & DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The “Career & Digital Development Workshop” was established by Family Self-Sufficiency and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency program staff, along with a nonprofit agency, to integrate job opportunity information, digital awareness, and valuable skills for Opportunity Home San Antonio residents. This workshop offered residents of Opportunity Home accessible training and techniques designed to boost their career success and employability. Graduating participants received laptops via the ConnectHome SA program, helping them to jumpstart and advance their careers.



Nominated for Excellence

Susan Ramos- Sossaman
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177 FAMILY NIGHT AT THE DOSEUM

The Opportunity Home San Antonio/The DoSeum partnership addresses educational inequity by offering Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) based learning for Opportunity Home families. This collaboration brings The DoSeum’s inquiry-based programming to residents through exclusive children’s museum events. The program strengthens bonds between children, caregivers, and Opportunity Home staff via engaging learning experiences that build critical thinking and collaboration skills. Since 2024, 675 residents have participated in special DoSeum Family Nights, creating educational pathways for underserved families while engaging residents outside public housing offices.



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178 ONSITE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Opportunity Home San Antonio and Leaven Kids partnered to establish transformative learning centers within two public housing communities. Each site provides free after-school tutoring, science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education, and mentorship to youth. This program addresses academic achievement gaps while creating safe, supportive environments where children develop confidence and essential skills. Leaven Kids advances the shared vision of breaking cycles of poverty through education. This innovative partnership builds

community resilience by investing directly in children's futures.



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179 STEM DAYS

The Opportunity Home San Antonio's Jobs Plus (JP) Program at Lincoln Heights and ConnectHome San Antonio (CHSA) partnered with the Family Service Association's Best Buy Teen Tech Center to create "STEM Days" for youth ages 13-18. This collaboration leveraged JP services, CHSA training, and the Teen Tech Center's expertise and infrastructure to provide high-quality STEM education, and incentives to include earning a free laptop. Partnering with the Teen Tech Center optimized program impact and reach by utilizing existing community resources and facilities. This collaboration offered a safe and supportive space where youth could explore STEM interests and develop skills for future academic and career success.



Nominated for Excellence

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180 BRINGING LEMONADE DAY TO KIDS IN PUBLIC HOUSING

Waco Housing Authority and Affiliates' (WHA) National Lemonade Day is a nationally recognized children's program that teaches children how to be entrepreneurs by running their own lemonade stands. Two years ago, the City of Waco began partnering with the African American Chamber of Commerce to make Lemonade Day a city-wide event. WHA wanted to make sure children living in public housing would have the same opportunity as children living in other areas of the city to learn all about entrepreneurship and the skills it takes to run a business



Nominated for Excellence

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181 BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AND FINANCIAL WELLNESS

On October 3, 2024, Hidalgo County Housing Authority’s La Palmilla and La Stella hosted National Night Out, bringing together over 125 residents for a night of safety, support, and financial empowerment. The event strengthened ties with law enforcement while offering financial counseling, budgeting tips, and emergency aid. Families enjoyed interactive safety demos, live entertainment, and kids’ activities. The addition of financial resources was a game-changer, providing attendees with real tools to improve their financial stability. With overwhelmingly positive feedback, we look forward to expanding next year’s event to continue building a stronger, more connected community.



Nominated for Excellence

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182 EMPOWERING FAMILIES: ADDRESSING PEER PRESSURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES AT LA PALMILLA

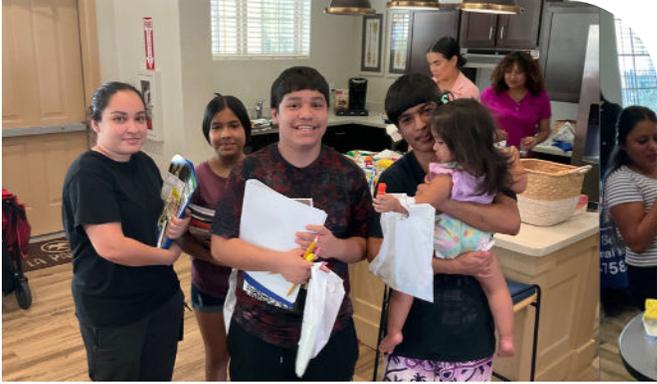
On February 7, 2024, Hidalgo County Housing Authority’s La Palmilla partnered with Behavioral Health Solutions to host a Mental and Emotional Wellness Session addressing peer pressure and social media’s impact on children. Parents gained valuable insights into behavioral patterns, while children engaged in discussions on self-confidence and decision-making. The event fostered open communication and

strengthened community support. Parents praised the session, recognizing the need for continued resources. Moving forward, we remain committed to expanding these initiatives, ensuring families have the tools to navigate today’s challenges with confidence.



Nominated for Excellence

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183 COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING TAKES PLACE DIRECTLY AT OUR PUBLIC HOUSING SITE

The City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) serves a significant population of underserved residents. A key challenge identified for many of these residents is the limited access to career training opportunities. RRHA partnered with Virginia Western Community College (VWCC). The collaborative effort focused on delivering a targeted training program within an accessible location with a remarkable 90% credential attainment rate. Together, RRHA and VWCC were able to assist public housing residents from the start of applying for admission all the way through certification, directly through the location of the EnVision Center, housed at our largest public housing site.



Nominated for Excellence

Greg Goodman
Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority
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184 TRANSIT PASS PROGRAM

Seattle Housing Authority (SHA), in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), provides all residents living in SHA-owned and -managed properties with free, unlimited ORCA transit cards. SDOT contributes \$2.25 million annually to support the program, while SHA oversees outreach and logistics. Recognized by the NAHRO 2025 Agency Awards of Merit, this initiative is one of the few in the nation to offer completely free public transportation through a housing authority. With continued funding, SHA plans to expand the program to include Housing Choice Voucher participants—doubling the number of eligible residents and removing a key barrier to accessing essential services. By offering free transportation, the program connects residents to healthcare, groceries, education, employment, and their broader community.



Nominated for
Excellence

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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?

The screenshot shows the NAHRO website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Store, My Account, Contact Us, Log in, and Search. Below this is a main menu with links for About, Members, Events, Training & Certification, Advocacy & Policy, News & Publications, and Jobs & RFPs. A dropdown menu is open under the 'Members' tab, listing options: Why Join NAHRO, Manage Your Membership, NAHRO Awards, NAHRO Fellowship Application Process, Scholarships, What Home Means to Me Poster Contest, and Best Practices Database. The 'Best Practices Database' link is highlighted with a green circle and a left-pointing arrow. On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with expandable sections for each of these menu items. The main content area features a large heading 'MEMBER' and a section titled '2026 Community Innovation Program' with three circular images: a modern building interior, a group of people on a stage, and several award trophies.

1

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

2

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



The 2026 Awards of Merit

Interested in submitting applications for next year's awards? The application period will start in January 2026.

For more information, visit www.nahro.org/merit or contact us at meritawards@nahro.org.

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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