



### **NACCED's 2020 Awards of Excellence**

Presented at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Conference and Training  
October 22, 2020

#### **Homeless Coordination/Assistance**

**Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development – *Lucille and Bruce Terwilliger Place***

As the first project of its kind in the country, the Lucille and Bruce Terwilliger Place project (formerly American Legion Post 139) offers a blueprint for veteran service organizations like the American Legion to partner with nonprofit developers to put their land to use on behalf of vulnerable veterans—men and women who have ably served our country but now find themselves struggling with significant health and housing challenges.

The innovative project began in 2016 when American Legion Post 139 chose nonprofit developer Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) to redevelop its 1.3-acre site on Washington Boulevard and replace its aging facility. This high opportunity location is within blocks of the Virginia Square Metro station, George Mason University's Arlington campus and many jobs and services. In addition to critically needed affordable housing, Terwilliger Place will provide veteran-focused programming in its private counseling spaces, community activity rooms and computer lab. The property will serve households earning from 30% of Area Median Income (AMI) up to 80% of AMI.

APAH has started construction of Terwilliger Place. Once completed in 2022, the project will provide 160 affordable apartments in Arlington as well as a new, modern 6,000-square-foot facility for American Legion Post 139. Veterans will be given priority placement in half of the building's 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units.

#### **Planning/Policy/Program Management**

**Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) – *Open Doors***

Los Angeles County renters face several barriers to securing housing. The County is comprised of high cost rental markets and low vacancy rates. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8)

Program participants are often unable to find property owners willing to lease their units to them, leaving program participants unable to use their vouchers when searching for housing. Vouchers were going unused and expiring, even after approved extensions, causing families to lose their assistance. But even worse, many families are not securing the crucial safe affordable housing that they so desperately needed, instead they were finding themselves homeless.

This problem was highlighted in the last two Los Angeles County Point in Time Homeless Counts (Count). Even with new funding that has been dedicated to ending homelessness in the County, each Count showed the numbers are still going up. Unfortunately, though thousands are being housed, even more are becoming homeless.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) came up with an innovative solution to this problem, a new incentive and mitigation program with the goal to retain current property owners, entice new owner participation, and heighten rental assistance program confidence. On January 1, 2020, the LACDA debuted its new Customer Service Unit and launched a new business model called Open Doors. The model centers on providing an enhanced customer service experience for property owners. By dedicating staff to provide immediate assistance to the needs of current and potential property owners, the LACDA hoped to increase the number of families who can utilize their vouchers in the highly competitive Los Angeles County rental market.

Open Doors is a collaborative effort between the LACDA and Los Angeles County.

Property owner assurances include:

- **SIGN-ON BONUS**

Follows the execution of a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract between the LACDA and a property owner participating in a rental assistance program for the first time with the LACDA in the amount of \$1,000 per owner.

- **VACANCY LOSS PAYMENTS**

One month's rent if the family vacates the unit without proper notice or is evicted for good cause.

- **DAMAGE MITIGATION**

Up to \$2,000 available for unit repairs not covered by the security deposit.

- **PEACE OF MIND**

Specialized staff to assist with concerns. Reliable rental payments deposited directly to the bank.

As of June 30, 2020, the LACDA has signed up 278 owners to Open Doors and issued each a Sign-On Bonus, making hundreds of additional units available to LACDA's voucher holders.

## **Innovation**

### **Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) – *Elimination of leaks and lead (Pb) in Public Housing with No Relocation!***

The Nueva Maravilla Public Housing Community, located in East Los Angeles, was built in 1943, and consists of 504 residential units, with approximately 1,450 residents comprised of 230 seniors, 727 adults, and 493 children.

In recent years, the copper potable water piping systems servicing the 354 family units at Nueva Maravilla started to experience “pinhole” leaks. As the original plumbing system had not been replaced, the agency was addressing leaks as they happen, while a complete repipe project was planned and budgeted for. Repiping meant replacing the pipes, which involved cutting into walls and ceilings, subsequent restoration of the damaged walls and ceiling, and disrupting and relocating the occupants during the process. The estimate for a project this size was \$10 million.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) was thinking of creative ways to complete a full repipe, but had some concerns with relocation as well as the estimated cost of \$10 million. The solution was the ePIPE system, a lead-free leak-free, in-place pipe restoration process. Before starting such a large project, staff conducted pilot testing using the ePIPE method in one building with seven units. The initial objective seemed simple enough; compare the ePIPE process to a traditional repipe, utilizing a contractor, third party consultant and independent lab. The test confirmed that not only were we addressing the leaks, we were actually removing any trace of lead in the water. It was a win win!

Initial observations for the pilot showed that by utilizing the ePIPE process, the restoration of the drinking water and water pipes in the seven- unit building was completed over two days, with no resident displacement and with minimal wall or ceiling intrusion. A repipe for a similar seven-unit apartment building not using this new method, would involve relocating the residents for 14 days, for the duration of the project. The pilot project was deemed a success with no relocation cost and leaks fixed, but more importantly, a reduction in lead to non-detectable levels.

As a result, the LACDA decided to have the water lines of the remaining 347 units at Nueva Maravilla protected in-place from leaks and lead leaching using the ePIPE process. The project was not only completed for half the estimated cost, but also in nearly 1/3 of the projected schedule and zero change orders which is unheard of in construction.

## **Affordable Housing**

### **City of Aurora, Illinois – *Homeownership Expo***

Increased homeownership rates offer important socioeconomic and neighborhood stabilization benefits to communities. Low-moderate income, first time homebuyers benefit from understanding each step in the home buying process. The Homeownership Expo provides free educational workshops in English and Spanish, and provides access to professionals from the mortgage lending, credit history/repair, real estate, legal, home inspection, and homeowner/title insurance industries. Potential homebuyers become better prepared consumers. 162 attendees from 18 cities registered for the Expo. Attendees participated in educational workshops and/or visited with 35 exhibitors from 8 industries.

## **HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

### **County of Essex Division of Housing and Community Development – *Valley Road Residential Urban Renewal, LLC***

Throughout Essex County there is a critical need for affordable housing for low to moderate income residents. Furthermore, historically many of the significant affordable housing projects have been concentrated in urban areas, thereby minimizing the potential benefits of diversifying the socioeconomic choices for county residents. And vacant land available for development is sparse, and often contaminated from previous land uses.

All three problems had to be addressed for the development of a 100 unit, mixed income residential property by Valley Road Residential (VRR) Urban Renewal, LLC at 22-24 Central Avenue, West Orange. This development project required patience by the principals of VRR (The Alpert Group and Ironstate Holdings), a commitment by state and local officials to clean an environmentally distressed location, and both a financial and enthusiastic commitment by the municipality to support this project.

As a result, this site will provide 55 affordable units for households with incomes ranging from 30% AMI up to 60% AMI, and is spurring the development of an adjacent affordable housing projects and a senior housing complex located in another section of town. This public-private partnership also enabled West Orange to add vibrant affordable housing that attracts commuters working in Newark or NYC, rejuvenate a nearby transit station, and augment ongoing economic development initiatives.