



2022 Awards of Excellence

NACCED 47th Annual Educational Conference & Training

Homeless Coordination/Assistance

Pima County, AZ Community and Workforce Development Program: “Emergency Eviction Legal Services”

Tenants facing eviction proceedings in court are at a disadvantage when they are unrepresented by counsel. Many tenants are unaware of their rights and the responsibilities of landlords. Begun in August of 2021, the Emergency Eviction Legal Services program improves access to justice by connecting these tenants to free legal advice and/or representation, helping to level the playing field.

Innovation

Allegheny County, PA Economic Development: “Allegheny County Blight Removal Program”

Blighted properties are a health and safety issue that inhibit community & economic development and decrease tax revenues of affected communities. Pennsylvania communities rely heavily on local tax collection to fund community needs, with real estate taxes being the most predictable source of revenue. Communities needed a new reliable source of funding to address blighted properties because they contributed to an economic drain on the municipality. Pennsylvania established Act 152 in 2016 providing counties a mechanism to establish dedicated funding specifically for blight remediation. In 2020 Allegheny County enacted an ordinance authorizing the collection of a \$15 Blight Removal Fee on all deed and mortgage recording transactions. Since its enactment, the fund has generated over \$4.9 million. Applicants can request funds to cover the cost of demolitions; multi-phase blight removal/demolition feasibility plans; reuse feasibility studies; and emergency demolitions. In its initial funding round \$1.8 million was awarded to demolish 100 structures and fund 1 planning study. The new program enables Allegheny County to supplement its existing blight removal efforts which are funded with CDBG dollars and focus on targeted remediation within Municipalities.

Planning/Policy/Program Management

Cook County, IL Department of Planning and Development: “The Cook County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (I and II)”

With the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic, many in the Suburban Cook County area lost their employment or were negatively impacted by the pandemic in a manner that inhibited their economic and housing stability, with minority communities being acutely harmed. This was initially mitigated with federal eviction moratoriums. However, as those moratorium periods progressively ended, many residents confronted real threats of eviction and the accompanying emotional and psychological distress these issues cause. A significant uptick was experienced in the suburban cook county communities, prompting the need for an emergency response.

The County established multiple emergency rental assistance programs, in its first and second iterations, leading the coordination with the State of Illinois and Chicago programs to ensure a seamless experience for applicants and that the maximum aid would be disbursed. The County sought to have every component affecting housing instability addressed: Homeless Services, Crisis Shelter, Utility Payments, Debt Relief Counseling and Eviction Prevention.

The County also established a unique court-based rental assistance program, which situated case managers within the courts to help those confronting eviction obtain aid and preserve their housing. The state courts have emphasized how critical this aid has been in subverting thousands of evictions and thwarting what would have inevitably resulted in housing chaos for the state. The results were an unmitigated success – the County met every milestone years in advance of Treasury prescribed deadlines, which was welcome to those residents in need of swift support. The demographic communities that were acutely harmed were those that received overwhelming support. In recognition and in furtherance of the County's efforts, the County was awarded with multiple reallocated funds to continue disbursing funds successfully to those in need. Both programs culminated in over \$140 M being disbursed to over 13,000 households (applying the state household size average would bring this support above 30,000 residents) . The County's response has also engendered public recognition from national outlets and, more importantly, the gratitude of its residents.

Economic Development

Los Angeles County, CA Development Authority Community Development Division: “LACDA/Cities Small Business Grant Program”

As the most populated County in the nation and home to more than 244,000 small businesses, the Los Angeles business community immediately faced severe impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in the Spring of 2020. Public health officials took difficult, heroic, and decisive actions to close public spaces to keep residents safe. As the pandemic continued, a massive decline in business activity and revenues across the County brought tremendous hardship and the local business community experienced unimaginable challenges to maintaining viability. The County of Los Angeles outreach to its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) participating cities revealed that many lacked the capacity to pivot their own resources towards new programs to provide economic assistance to their local businesses.

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) mobilized a rapid response to the sudden change in priorities by developing the LACDA/Cities Small Business Grant (SBG) Program. Beyond fulfilling its grant administration roles, the LACDA became directly involved in disbursing CDBG and Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds to struggling business owners on behalf of their partnering cities. The LACDA took on the duties of Program development, administration, and execution of grant agreements with businesses, while the cities committed their limited staff capacity to marketing the Program to their own business community. With this model, participating cities and the LACDA redefined and expanded their traditional intergovernmental roles.

Using this innovative and collaborative approach, the Program was offered in three grant opportunity cycles from May 2020 through June 2022, with CDBG Urban County cities joining forces with the LACDA to bring economic relief to their business community. The collective effort brought the combined resources of 17 small cities and \$2,849,865 in CDBG and CDBG-CV funds under a singular Program they could promote as their own to offer grants to their local businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Providing cities with administrative support and committing funds for assistance to COVID-19 impact-eligible businesses uplifted the genuine partnerships that exist between the business community and local governments and provided tangible results. In total, the Program disbursed grant awards to 278 businesses across the following cities: Azusa, Claremont, Commerce, Covina, Culver City, Duarte, Hermosa Beach, La Cañada-Flintridge, La Mirada, Lomita, Malibu, Maywood, San Dimas, San Fernando, South El Monte, Torrance, and Westlake Village. This effort sustained the availability of goods and services in these partner cities, as well as created and retained the jobs needed to provide these vital economic drivers in each community. Depending on how the grants were qualified, the Program created/retained 184 jobs for low- and moderate-income persons or benefited more than 100,000 low- and moderate-income residents.

Affordable Housing

Arlington County, VA Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, Housing Division: “Barcroft Apartments: Preserving Affordability and Preventing Displacement”

Barcroft Apartments is a 60-acre garden style apartment community containing 1,334 units, built in phases between 1939 and 1953, and located along the Columbia Pike corridor of Arlington, VA. Maintaining the diversity and housing affordability along Columbia Pike had been a County priority for decades. In 2012, a Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan (NAP) was approved by the County Board, which established the future vision for the primarily multi-family residential areas along the Columbia Pike corridor. The NAP established the ambitious goal of preserving 100% of the 6,200 market rate affordable units (MARKS) existing at the time along this corridor, either through preservation or new development. Barcroft Apartments comprised almost 22% of those total MARKS (1,334 units). Due to the relative size, number of units, and diversity of residents living at the property, maintaining this apartment community as affordable housing had been a County priority long before the property was listed for sale in the fall of 2021.

The sale of the property risked displacement of its current residents if purchased by a developer wishing to pursue only by-right market rate development. Instead, the JLRP acquisition of Barcroft Apartments, which included financing from Arlington County and the Amazon Housing Equity Fund, preserved the affordability of the largest market rate affordable housing community in the County. The financing package included restrictive covenants that JLRP will maintain the 1,334 units up to 60% of the area median income (AMI) for 99-years. As part of the long-term plans, JLRP is now undertaking a master planning process, with significant input from existing residents, to reimagine the Barcroft property, to include a mix of renovated units and new development. Ultimately, the Barcroft Apartments community will be transformed into a vibrant mixed-use and mixed-income community, while also preserving the affordability of 1,334 existing units.

Community Development

Pima County, AZ Sahuarita Food Bank & Community Resource Center Facility: “Nourishing the Community’s Future”

The Sahuarita Food Bank has grown 20 to 30% every year since its inception in 2009. In 2015, the need for a dedicated facility to house the food bank along with a multi-agency service center was envisioned so as to create a one-stop service hub and expand the organization’s missions. The church where the SFB-CRC was incubated and housed, as a

secular initiative, could no longer support the growth in the number of food bank visitors or the plans to support community residents in achieving economic stability and self-sufficiency. The SFB-CRC would not be able to achieve its vision for a community that works for all of its residents without a new purpose-built facility. The Church offered to lease land it owns to allow SFB-CRC's plans to proceed,

In early 2022, after four years of consulting with the community, planning, fundraising, designing and construction, the food bank opened a new 14,300 square foot building to provide greatly expanded warehouse space and programs such as workforce development, health and nutrition, and family support. The Sahuarita Food Bank & Community Resource Center (SFB-CRC) has been reborn to provide the community with services far beyond meeting basic food needs. Many of the individuals and families they serve come from the rural areas that circle the Sahuarita area. Between 2017 and 2021, each year SFB-CRC applied for CDBG and/or Covid-designated funding through Pima County and was eventually awarded sufficient funding for the new facility. Without the partnership and support of the County, this project could not have occurred.

Today, six months after the completion of the new building, the food bank is serving more residents than ever because of high rents, high inflation in the prices of food, and the cessation of special Covid provisions such as enhanced SNAP benefits and the Child Tax Credit.