

Quarterly

Highlights and Updates



First Quarter
Fiscal Year 2015-16

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF CDBG

On August 27, 2015, the Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles (CDC) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) co-hosted an event celebrating 40 years of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) partnerships and successes. U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu and Los Angeles County Mayor Michael D. Antonovich joined in celebrating CDBG's 40 great years of community improvement. HUD, the Federal agency that oversees the CDBG Program, thanked the County for its leadership and innovation in putting CDBG dollars into action.

One hundred twenty-five partners from participating cities, non-profit organizations, County departments, and other stakeholders came together to celebrate the success of what is arguably the Federal Government's most successful domestic program. CDBG's success can be attributed to its utility as a flexible tool to assist local governments meeting the requirements of low- and moderate-income persons, eliminating slums and blight, and addressing urgent needs related to disaster recovery. The Los Angeles Urban County Program includes 47 participating cities and the unincorporated areas of the County. Since its inception, \$1.2 billion in CDBG funds have been put into action by the County to address pressing neighborhood and human service needs.





Scholarships Awarded to 30 County Public Housing and Section 8 Program Participants

The Los Angeles Community Development Foundation (CDF) awarded over \$43,000 in Housing Authority Resident (HAR) Scholarship funds to 30 public housing and Section 8 participants attending a 4-year university or community college. Awardees were recognized on July 9, 2015, during the 2015 Reality Check Conference held at The California Endowment Center in Los Angeles. This one-day conference, exclusively for participants of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) pursuing higher education, focused on educational workshops, career panels, college resources, and more. The highlight of the event was Keynote Speaker Dr. Patricia Ramos, Dean of Santa Monica College, who spoke candidly about overcoming the challenges of her own personal upbringing in public housing.

HUD officials as well as representatives from the County's First, Third, and Fifth Supervisorial Districts addressed recipients, offering their congratulations. Annually, the CDF offers HAR Scholarships as it fulfills its mission to end generational poverty in public housing and Section 8 by providing positive life-changing opportunities. This year's recipients include top high school graduates and first-generation adult college students aspiring to succeed in their chosen careers, such as students pursuing studies within the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields.

The awarded scholars were selected for their academic excellence, community involvement, and their exceptional resiliency in overcoming life challenges to pursue their educational and career goals. Since its inception, \$217,600 in HAR Scholarships have been awarded.



Award-Winning Programs

Section 8

- Implementation of the Green Route System
- Implementation of the Data Compliance System
- Motivational Milestones of the Family Self-Sufficiency

Public Housing

- Electrifying Student Success
- Smoke-Free Policy in Public Housing
- Maintenance To Go
- Maintenance Injury Prevention
- Modernization: On Time and On Budget

Community Development

- Courtyard at La Brea

NAHRO Recognizes HACoLA as a Model for Innovation

As one of the largest providers of affordable housing in Southern California, HACoLA proudly continues to pave the way for non-traditional, business-oriented approaches that streamline housing programs and optimize service delivery.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) hosted its annual Awards of Merit program which provides a platform to recognize public housing agencies across the nation for their best practices in public housing and community development. Seven Merit Awards were presented to HACoLA on July 30, 2015. During the conference, representatives from HACoLA's Assisted Housing Division attended housing seminars and hosted an information booth which offered the opportunity to engage with other housing authorities and provide information about HACoLA's award-winning projects.

These awards are evidence of HACoLA's excellent track record in responding to the social and economic challenges of administering affordable housing programs by developing innovative solutions. They are a testament to the hard work and dedication of HACoLA's staff and evidence of our continued commitment to provide housing assistance to low-income families.

A Successful School Year is On the Horizon

On August 20, 2015, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis visited California Elementary School in unincorporated West Valinda to help distribute 100 donated backpacks filled with school supplies made possible with help from the non-profit agency New Horizons Caregivers Group (New Horizons) and funding from the CDBG Program.

Supervisor Solis, who grew up in nearby La Puente, CA, is a proud supporter of New Horizons because of its commitment to assist students and their families. To show her support, Supervisor Solis presented a check in the amount of \$50,000 in CDBG funding at the event for the non-profit agency's Family Incentives Equals Students Taking Action (F.I.E.S.T.A.) program. Through the program, food and educational school supplies are provided directly to families with students who live in the unincorporated First Supervisorial District. The program serves approximately 260 low- and moderate-income families.

New Horizons' goal to "eradicate poverty through education" is being accomplished by partnering with local elementary schools which provide parenting educational classes to boost classroom attendance. Donated school supplies, toy incentives, and enough groceries for 15,000 meals monthly are distributed to parents, in return for their participation and pledge to achieve 100% attendance during their child's school year. As parents learn how to help their children succeed in school, student attendance increases and parents begin to volunteer their time to the school community.



Photos Courtesy of the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis



HACoLA Celebrates its 16th Annual Back to School Jams

In August 2015, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) hosted its annual series of Back to School Jams at the Carmelitos, Harbor Hills, Nueva Maravilla, and South County (scattered sites) public housing developments. These events first began in 2000, and have become a welcomed tradition by public housing youth and their families eager to make the upcoming school year a success. HACoLA was honored to have Congressman Alan Lowenthal and Congresswoman Maxine Waters visit the sites to talk with residents, thank vendors for their participation, and hand out backpacks.

Over 45 exhibitors provided educational and health-related resources and information to some 700 families. Over 1,200 public housing youth were treated to entertainment, food, dance, and raffles. However, the highlight of each Back to School Jam was the distribution of backpacks stocked with age-appropriate school supplies, athletic shoes, and free haircuts for each public housing youth attending grades K-12. These gifts were made possible through the generous support of Cottonwood Church and Shelter Partnership, a local non-profit organization which provides resources and housing through its S. Mark Taper Foundation Shelter Resource Bank.

Welcome to The Metro @ Compton

The CDC joined Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Compton Mayor Aja Brown, Meta Housing Corporation, Western Community Housing, and the Compton community to celebrate the grand opening of The Metro @ Compton Senior Apartments (The Metro @ Compton).

The Metro @ Compton provides 75 units of affordable housing reserved for low- and very-low income seniors aged 55 years and older. The project converted a formerly vacant lot into a transit oriented development located adjacent to the Compton Metro Blue Line light rail and bus stations. The Metro @ Compton is GreenPoint rated for its solar power and use of a photovoltaic system to heat water and generate power for the building. The graywater system adds further sustainability by irrigating the landscaping with water reclaimed from the onsite laundry system.

The CDC provided over \$2.5 million in construction and permanent financing to support the development of the project. Sean Rogan, Executive Director of the CDC, said, "Seeing a housing development like The Metro @ Compton open its doors and welcome its senior residents into their new homes, shows how valuable and necessary, the County's Affordable Housing Trust funds are. The County and CDC work hard every year to protect the scarcely funded resources that often face steep reductions so that County residents continue to have access to safe and affordable housing."

The Metro @ Compton is across the street from the Douglas F. Dollarhide Community Center, which offers a variety of senior programs and services including arts and crafts, dance, and field trips.



New Library Coming to South Whittier in Fall 2016

On July 30, 2015, Los Angeles County officials joined in the groundbreaking celebration for the future 14,411 square-foot South Whittier Library. Following an accelerated planning and design stage, a construction contract was awarded to Cal-City Construction, Inc., to get the project on its way.

The CDC is overseeing the development of the \$15 million building project, funded by the office of Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe as part of his "Operation Libraries" effort. Based on community needs, the facility will contain adult, teen, and children's reading areas, an early childhood/family area, programming space, a homework center, group and teen study rooms, a 100-seat community meeting room with audio-visual system, staff areas, public restrooms, an outdoor reading patio, and a kitchenette. The library will also be equipped with express-service checkout machines at the lobby, information service pods, public access computers, and Wi-Fi. The facility has been designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Rating, and will contain many sustainable features such as permeable paving, bicycle storage, drought-tolerant landscaping, and a photovoltaic system.

