

PAHRA PROUDLY PRESENTS 2024 BELLAMY & BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

The PAHRA Best Practices Showcase is held annually to recognize the achievements of our member agencies, and to demonstrate the diversity of activities involved in providing affordable housing, improving lives, and revitalizing communities. We recently recognized members who have implemented innovative ideas, explored successful entrepreneurial activities, exhibited excellence in design, shown progressive program operations, provided stellar customer service or supportive services in a unique way, or created a lasting impact on their communities.

The Bellamy is PAHRA's highest recognition of outstanding achievement. 2024 **Bellamy Awards** were awarded to the following:

Altoona Housing Authority – Gloria Gates CARE Clinic

High-quality health care for low-income residents is the vision that has driven Altoona Housing Authority to partner with Dr. Zane Gates and other community-focused partners including care providers, insurers, and a variety of local resource agencies to create the Gloria Gates CARE Clinic, a patient-centered healthcare model that promotes whole-person care. Whole-person care involves more than just medical needs, it also addresses the Five Social Determinants of Health that primarily affect low-income individuals with the hope of helping them rise above the challenges that they face in their daily lives. The CARE Clinic is located in Green Avenue Tower to provide seniors and disabled residents of Green Avenue Tower and nearby Eleventh Street Tower with easy access to medical care and a variety of other supportive services including: comprehensive primary care • diagnostic testing and screenings • in-house pharmacy • on-site lab services • physical, behavioral, and medication therapies.



Altoona Housing Authority envisions the growth and expansion of this concept into additional developments in the coming years.

Johnstown Housing Authority – JHA Training & Employment Program

In Cambria County, where Johnstown Housing Authority (JHA) is located, there is a critical labor shortage. Recognizing public housing residents as a potentially untapped labor pool of under- or unemployed individuals, JHA partnered with Johnstown Area Regional Industries (JARI), Penn Highlands Community College, and PA CareerLink to develop the JHA Training & Employment Program, which promotes personal growth and prepares JHA residents for successful workforce experiences. The hallmark of this program is meeting people where they are at by hosting educational sessions in public housing community rooms and providing services that eliminate barriers to educational opportunities and employment.

- Professional instructors are brought on-site;
- Laptops, printers, and other devices were purchased to incorporate digital literacy and work readiness skills;
- Bus passes are provided for those lacking transportation
- Childcare needs are supported through various resources
- Tours of local educational institutions and area employers offering job opportunities for a variety of educational and skill levels are organized;
- Career boot camps are coordinated offering OSHA Safety Certification, as well as exposure to woodworking, metal shop, CNC machining, etc.;
- Job fairs are held and assistance in locating scholarships for tuition or training is provided



The team of trusted partners involved in this successful program have a long-standing collaborative relationship and commitment to underserved populations by fostering training, employment services, promoting independence, and opportunities for self-improvement that truly changes lives.

Earning two **Best Practice Awards** was Allegheny County Housing Authority for several excellent programs as outlined below:

Allegheny County Housing Authority – Landlord Communications

Allegheny County Housing Authority has developed ways to communicate with landlords to increase their involvement in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, to promote participation, break down bias, and eliminate stigmas. They have created the positions of Landlord Liaisons whose primary goal is to be transparent and educational. They accomplish this through a multi-media approach including:

- Utilizing social media platforms with targeted recruitment based on analytics
- Email outreach twice a week to showcase the program and available units
- Being available to listen and cooperate with landlords, reacting in a positive manner
- Targeted marketing to combat veteran homelessness
- The creation of two websites specifically designed for HCV purposes:
 - www.rethinksection8.com – to educate, recruit, and assist landlords
 - www.achahomefinder.org – a free tool for listing and/or locating available units



The Authority also hosts Landlord Appreciation days. Their focused efforts on building and maintaining relationships have produced great results.

Allegheny County Housing Authority – Compensating for Barriers

Allegheny County Housing Authority hosted a community outreach event at which nearly 50 organizations representing academic, governmental, medical, educational, motivational, and informational resources were represented to address demonstrated needs of the community and connect them with services to elevate their quality of life. Such events allow for exposure to increase awareness of resources that create barriers for marginalized populations, whether those be systemic, geographical, socio-economic, digital inequity, or health-related issues. Provided were guidance on financial literacy, cancer screenings, immunizations, information on child care, low-income car purchasing programs, rent mediation, and so much more.

Such events can definitely help to compensate for and overcome the barriers that keep under-represented populations marginalized as they provide a holistic approach to achieving independence and self-sustainability.



The Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) was also recognized with five **Certificates of Merit** for a number of other excellent programs as outlined below:

ACHA – Z-Hope

Residents of affordable housing communities may often be overlooked when it comes to day-to-day services that support their emotional, educational, and social well-being. Allegheny County Housing Authority has partnered with Zeta Phi Beta Society, Upsilon Eta Zeta Chapter, to bridge those gaps, move beyond societally imposed limitations, restore optimism and vitality in their residential communities. This partnership with the Mon-Valley Zetas has provided a variety of programming and events to address educational needs, anti-bullying, violence reduction, winter coat drives, online fraud protection, and empowering the elderly. Building this relationship with the Mon-Valley Zetas has been a true benefit that has added value to the lives of ACHA community residents.



ACHA – Air Quality Project

Congratulations to ACHA for supporting this resident-based program designed to bring awareness to unhealthy environmental pollutants and their effects on under-resourced communities. An ACHA resident who attended the University of Pittsburgh’s Public Health Science Academy partnered with the ROCIS (*Reducing Outdoor Contaminants in Indoor Spaces*) organization to secure free medical-grade HEPA filter air cleaners for other residents of their community. The project also involved monitoring air particles in those homes before and after the air cleaners were provided, with ROCIS also covering the cost of HVAC diagnostic tests to determine whether other ventilation improvements can be made to improve indoor air quality.



ACHA – Sheldon Park More for a Cure in 2024

Resident Councils are liaisons designed to create bridges between community residents and resources. The Sheldon Park Resident Council outdid themselves as they brought together neighbors, local businesses, area service providers, and non-profit organizations to



address resource gaps while raising money to help families and patients of St. Jude Children’s Hospital. Local state representatives, school and business leaders drew crowds to the event for a day of dancing, dining, and donations. More than \$3,000 was raised and donated directly to St. Jude. ACHA is grateful to the Sheldon Park Resident Council for their willingness to bring their community together for such a worthy cause.

ACHA – West View Curb Appeal

Whether one is discussing tangible outcomes – like market values of homes – or intangible outcomes – like strengthened bonds – improving curb appeal has positive impact. Residents of West View presented an initiative to create greenspace in their community. The project included removal of existing landscaping, new grass, plants, flower beds, beautifying curbs and gas meters, and updating exterior lighting. Additional donations of outdoor furniture and volunteer labor produced a pleasant transformation to be enjoyed by both residents and the community-at-large.



ACHA – Children’s Window to Africa

One of the most successful programs in Allegheny County that exemplifies the benefits of cultivating programs based on the demonstrated needs and identities of community members is Children’s Window to Africa. The program is hosted by ACHA partner, Beverly Jewel Wall Lovelace Family Resources. By showcasing the positive outcomes that stem from a deep, centered understanding of culture, enriching the cultural and historical knowledge of African heritage to form a deep, centered understanding of culture, the program has grown from one summer program to 20 locations around Allegheny County. Through this program, low-income housing residents experience deeper cultural awareness, develop a stronger sense of community, and are more likely to achieve academic equity.



Feel free to contact any of the participating agencies if you are interested in obtaining more information or replicating one of these award-winning activities within your own organization.

Congratulations to our each of our award recipients, and to all of our member agencies who are putting forth their best efforts every day to provide award winning services. Watch your mailbox next spring for details on submitting your agency’s Best Practices for our 2025 Showcase.