Awards Presentation Overview

Council of State Community Development Agencies
Annual Training Conference

Traverse City, Michigan
September 29 – October 2, 2019
The Allatoona Community is an area of southeast Bartow County physically separated from the rest of the county by Lake Allatoona. The area is 84% low-to-moderate income. Most of the residences are mobile homes, brought to the area in the early 1980's. The area was plagued by high unemployment, low graduation rates, drug use and trash. This area of high need was not being adequately served by Bartow County. The residents lacked resources for food, clothing and shelter. There were no positive outlets for youth activities. These factors created a feeling of hopelessness among the residents.

Bartow County applied for a $500,000 CDBG Grant to construct a Resource Center in this area to deal with the problems described. The county also obligated funds to construct a recreational gym and a trash collection and compactor site. The residents now have many resources in their community to help them get through tough times and to better their lives. Over 2,000 residents have been served since the building opened in 2015.
Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community
Bent County, Colorado

After the Fort Lyon Correctional Facility was decommissioned in 2012, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) re-purposed the facility as the Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community to provide recovery-oriented transitional housing for homeless individuals. The program combines housing with peer led counseling and educational, vocational, and employment services for up to 250 homeless and formerly homeless persons from across Colorado, with an emphasis on serving homeless veterans. Located in rural southeast Colorado, Fort Lyon is a long drive from old habits; it provides a new kind of opportunity for people to get healthy, sober, and emotionally strong.

The state partners with community leaders to implement this innovative model. DOLA contracts with the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless to oversee the program and provide recovery-oriented supportive services, and with Bent County to manage the facility. Additional partners include Otero Junior College, Lamar Community College, Southeast Mental Health Services, Prowers Medical Center and Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.

Residents fully engage in the overall operations of the campus to develop vocational skills, including food services, facilities maintenance, grounds maintenance, housekeeping, and wastewater management—in conjunction with their daily participation in peer support groups. Educational and other vocational opportunities are available through local colleges. Residents are also encouraged to explore and share their own creative passions to help build community while assisting with recovery.

The ultimate goal of this program is for residents to recover from homelessness and substance use, prepare for long-term housing stability, and reintegrate into their community of choice.
The upper two stories of the historic French Block, constructed in 1875, sat vacant for 81 years in Vermont’s Capital City. A 2016 Market Study found a >1% vacancy rate in the City of Montpelier. The successful rehabilitation of this prominent historic downtown building is the crowning example of Vermont’s collaborative approach to the development of affordable housing and prioritization of the renewal of our historic downtowns. $500,000 in CDBG funding and $225,000 HOME funding helped to makeup the project’s total budget of approximately 6 million dollars. The French Block project rehabilitated a total of 18 units (15 one-bedroom and three efficiency units), 14 of which are affordable. Of the 14 affordable units, five are affordable to households between 30% and 50% of median income, and nine are affordable to households between 50% and 80% of median income. One unit is specifically designated for a chronically homeless household. The French Block units are subject to a housing subsidy covenant that requires the property be used as affordable housing in perpetuity. A primary focus of the French Block project was to increase energy efficiency and ensure affordability, while keeping the historic character of the building intact. This project can be looked to as a strong example of collaboration between stakeholders to achieve the multiple goals of affordability, energy efficiency and historic preservation. There are similar examples to French Block in downtowns across the State of Vermont—underutilized historic buildings falling into disrepair that can be reinvented with a dose of vision, partnership and collaboration among local, state and federal partners. Successful reinvestment in these properties can result in quality, affordable, and sustainable housing for Vermont residents.
For more than 100 years, the two-block Andrew J. Bell Junior High School campus anchored New Orleans’ Tremé neighborhood as a place for education, music training and cultural development. That all changed on August 29, 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. The five-building Bell School campus was abandoned following the hurricane and, for more than a decade, the buildings sat silent and empty, and continued to deteriorate.

In 2012, Artspace, a nonprofit real estate developer, saw the Bell school site as an opportunity to rejuvenate Tremé's cultural infrastructure while renewing, restoring, and refurbishing a vacant, dilapidated campus to its rightful place as a cultural hub. In February 2015, the Housing Authority of New Orleans voted to allow Artspace to purchase the former Andrew J. Bell Junior High School for redevelopment.

A year later, Artspace acquired the property and collaborated with Providence Community Housing and nearly 30 stakeholders to fund the $38 million project. Officials broke ground on April 5, 2016, a few months after the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Two years later, the Bell Artspace Campus was reborn with a grand opening ceremony on April 19, 2018.

Today, the restored Bell Artspace Campus provides 79 affordable one- and two-bedroom housing units geared toward 115 low- and moderate-income artists, cultural workers, and their families. The campus also provides 2,000 square feet of additional, complementary space for small nonprofit organizations and creative enterprises.

As Tremé and all of New Orleans continues to rebuild, the Bell Artspace Campus ensures that the artists and culture bearers of this region retain access to affordable space where they can live, work and perform.