

THE HUD SECRETARY'S

Opportunity & Empowerment Award

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American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

Encouraging excellence in planning has been the major purpose of the American Planning Association (APA) since its inception. The APA National Planning Excellence Awards honor achievement and planning outcomes, whether exemplified by plans, individuals, or organizations. These awards continue a proud tradition begun more than 50 years ago. Past and future award winners offer tangible proof of the planning profession's power to positively shape our world. They also demonstrate the impact citizens can have when they become partners in the planning process. The National Planning Excellence Awards exemplify how planning helps create communities of lasting value.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, in partnership with the American Planning Association, announces the 18th annual Secretary's Opportunity and Empowerment Award as part of APA's 2015 National Planning Awards. The Secretary's Opportunity and Empowerment Award recognizes excellence in planning that has led to measurable benefits in terms of increased economic employment, education, or housing choice or mobility for low- and moderate-income residents.

Nature of the Award

A single award will be made for a community or plan, program, or project that, as a direct result of the effort, demonstrates improved quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents. Emphasis is placed on how creative housing, economic development, and private investments have been used in or with a comprehensive community development plan to empower residents who reside in that community or around it.

This award also emphasizes tangible results and recognizes the planning discipline and its contributions as a community strategy. Nominees should show how they have overcome difficult community issues to achieve effective measurable outcomes, such as the reduction of urban blight, creation of jobs, preservation of affordable housing, or the expansion of transit mobility. Applicants must also demonstrate effective collaborative efforts with other entities, public and private. Examples include community development corporations (CDCs), banking institutions, advocacy organizations, philanthropy, for- and non-profit homebuilders, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The strategy should employ a variety of actions that maximize increased choice and opportunity for all citizens in the community. **To the maximum extent possible, submissions should involve formal community planning efforts and include physical improvements and interventions (although the latter are not required). The strategy submitted should have been in effect a minimum of 3 years.**

Criteria

I. Planning. How has the submission addressed existing plans (comprehensive, regional, and neighborhood)? How did the program or project respect and integrate or maintain existing and cultural content? Describe the specific role did planners play in achieving the results. How was the planning process important to subsequent implementation? How involved in the plan were civic groups and individuals from private, nonprofit, and public perspectives, particularly those who may have been left out of similar efforts in the past? Explain the collaborative effort between public and private entities. The submission must provide a detailed account of how citizens were involved in each stage of the planning process.

II. Results. Explain how the submission addressed and documented the need for increased and sustained employment opportunities, quality education, and access to affordable housing or housing choice and mobility among low- and moderate-income residents through effective transportation systems. The submission must make an attempt to address each of these planning areas. How were these efforts cost effective and how did they improve quality assurance? The submission must include beginning and end dates, detailed cost and funding data, and information about when the results were implemented.

III. Innovation. Describe how the submission used innovative, forward-looking approaches to address various community-wide needs. How is the project innovative for the locality? How are these pioneering efforts applicable on a local and national scale? Are they replicable in other neighborhood or community contexts? For projects using HOPE VI (or Choice Neighborhoods) funds, the submission must show how the project exceeded the basic requirements of the program demonstrated through measurable outcomes (e.g., number of jobs and affordable housing units created and preserved, home-ownership rates, education outcomes, crime and poverty rates).

IV. Transferability. How, and to what extent, has the submission served as an example for other localities working to address challenges inherent in the neighborhood or community? How does the program provide useful prescriptive measures for other communities similarly situated? How does the submission explicitly demonstrate that the project overcame these challenges to implement a successful program?

Eligibility

This competition is open to APA members and nonmembers.

Judging and Awards Ceremony

Judging for the HUD Secretary's Opportunity and Empowerment Award will take place in November 2014. The award presentation will be made at APA's 2015 National Planning Awards luncheon ceremony, which will take place at the 2015 National Planning Conference in Seattle, April 18–22, 2015. The award recipient will receive a personalized sculpture, will be highlighted in a multimedia presentation at the awards luncheon, and will be featured in a Spring 2015 edition of *Planning* magazine.

Submission Information and Requirements

All entries must be submitted online through the American Planning Association website at www.planning.org/awards/. The online application form will be available beginning July 15, 2014. The deadline for completing submissions is midnight (central) August 26, 2014.

The online form requests the following information:

- » A 2015 HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award nomination form that includes the name of the

entry; name and contact information of the person submitting the nomination and who also will serve as the award coordinator; additional names and respective contact information for other people associated with the nomination, if applicable.

- » A summary of the entry (up to 200 words), including most recent census data (or other more recent data) indicating total population of target area, as well as cost and funding source information. Where necessary, applicants should reference comprehensive plans.
- » An explanation that specifically answers how the nomination meets the award criteria. Responses to award criteria stated in this announcement (and also on the APA website) should include specific examples that support or illustrate your points (150 to 300 words).
- » One to five one-page letters or statements in support of the entry. Letters or statements should offer support for the value of the nominated effort and may not be written by the nominator of the submission or by anyone directly involved with the nominated effort. Comments from appropriate APA chapters, divisions, and members and stakeholders or others familiar with or knowledgeable about the nominated effort are encouraged. Do not mail letters.
- » Five digital images (.jpg format) with photo captions that provide context and show the award nomination's positive results. Images should supplement, not restate, what exists elsewhere in the nomination materials or application. A caption between 15 to 25 words should accompany each image. Photo collages and PowerPoint presentations ARE NOT acceptable. Submit only digital images that are not copyrighted and may be reproduced by HUD and APA without a fee, charge, or copyright infringement. Entries without accompanying illustrations will be disqualified.
- » Emphasis is placed on nominations that show implementation of a strategy and plan and offer demonstrated success and results. Additional information that supports the nomination may be included.
- » All supporting materials listed in the submission requirements must be included with the entry. Brevity is encouraged. Entries should reference related information to prove adherence to the criteria.
- » Supporting documentation should take the form of reviews of the implementation effort, analysis of the results, newspaper clippings, editorials, etc. (Supplemental items must be submitted as Word documents, PDF files, provide web links to these items, or submitted on a CD.)

Additional Information

The awards committee's procedures prohibit any communication with jurors on behalf of an entry. Such communication is cause for disqualification. Winning entries become the property of APA.

No registration fee or other costs are required for submitting a nomination. Nominators do not need to be members of APA to submit entries.

Additional information about submitting a 2015 HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award, along with the online nomination form, is available on the APA website (www.planning.org/awards/).

If you have questions or need additional information, contact APA Public Affairs Associate Roberta Rewers by e-mail, rrewers@planning.org, or by phone, 312-786-6395.

Deadline

APA must receive completed entries and all accompanying materials by Tuesday, August 26, 2014. Any entries submitted after this date will not be eligible.