

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**31<sup>st</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Celebrating Quality Service”**

**2017 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: HOUSING WITHOUT BORDERS**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** JANUARY 2016  
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2016)

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

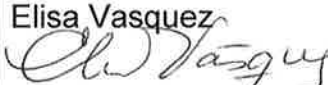

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 In the midst of Los Angeles County’s homeless crisis, the Housing Authority of the  
 2 County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) has implemented groundbreaking initiatives to  
 3 provide relief to hundreds of homeless individuals and families. The homelessness  
 4 initiatives implemented through HACoLA’s Section 8 and Public Housing programs  
 5 streamlined Section 8 voucher issuances, established inter-agency agreements with  
 6 other housing agencies, added a homeless preference to the waitlist, and created the  
 7 award-winning Landlord Veteran Incentive Program (VIP) and Homeless Incentive  
 8 Program (HIP). Through these homelessness initiatives, HACoLA has tackled the  
 9 extraordinarily multi-faceted problem and addressed challenges faced by the County’s  
 10 most vulnerable populations. The agency’s efforts have been instrumental in fulfilling  
 11 both the County’s Homeless Initiative, and HACoLA’s mission to ‘*Build Better Lives and*  
 12 *Better Neighborhoods.*’ **The agency’s efforts have resulted in more than 700**  
 13 **homeless families being housed within 18 months.** While HACoLA recognizes that  
 14 there is still much to do to end homelessness, its recent successes represent a strong  
 15 foundation which the agency intends to continue building upon.

**BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY**

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles 700 W. Main Street, Alhambra, CA 91801	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (626) 262-4510
<b>PROGRAM MANAGER’S NAME</b> Emilio Salas, Deputy Executive Director	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (626) 586-1505 <b>EMAIL</b> Emilio.Salas@hacola.org
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME)</small> Elisa Vasquez 	<b>DATE</b> 6/26/17 <b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (626) 586-1762 <b>EMAIL</b> Elisa.Vasquez@lacdc.org
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Sean Rogan 	<b>DATE</b> 7/6/17 <b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (626) 586-1500

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**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success. Use Arial 12 point font.

**Challenge:** The homeless crisis in Los Angeles County (County) continues to escalate. The latest figures from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s (LAHSA) 2017 Homeless Point-in-Time Count show a homeless population in excess of 57,000, an alarming 23% increase from 2016. At the core of the County’s alarming homeless crisis is the region’s rental unaffordability. According to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies’ annual 2017 report, Los Angeles leads the nation in rental unaffordability. In fact, 57.1% of these renters are “cost-burdened,” paying more than 30% of their income towards rent, which places many at imminent risk of homelessness. As one of the nation’s largest Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) administers over 25,000 Section 8 vouchers, including Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, and Continuum of Care (CoC) certificates, and manages over 3,200 units of public housing. Understanding the severity of the homelessness problem, HACoLA has committed a sizable portion of its resources and pioneered collaborative efforts amongst the County, cities, public agencies, and community partners to tackle this moral crisis.

Federal housing subsidies play a critical role in combating homelessness, but the effective utilization of these vouchers by homeless individuals presents various challenges that necessitate innovative and unconventional approaches. Some of the challenges faced by the homeless are well documented: financial, physical, mental, and disability-related. Other barriers are directly tied to regional economic factors, such as Los Angeles County’s tight rental vacancy rate being under 3%. The challenge is further compounded by the stigma of homelessness and landlord unwillingness to lease available units to homeless voucher holders. As pressing as these challenges are, there are also widely-noted administrative barriers that exacerbate the problem, from jurisdictional boundaries limiting the housing search area to cumbersome and inefficient bureaucratic procedures creating added barriers for this vulnerable population. The impact of these barriers on homeless individuals and families has contributed to this population’s low voucher utilization. **For every five homeless voucher holders, only one successfully secured housing.** To address these challenges, HACoLA incorporated groundbreaking strategies to impact housing success rates.

**Solution:** In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, HACoLA implemented a waiting list preference for the HCV and Public Housing programs, committing 35% of HCVs available through routine program turnover, to the chronically homeless persons referred by various Community Based Organizations (CBOs). HACoLA reserved the remaining

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65 percent of vouchers for homeless individuals pulled from our waiting list. It also established a public housing waitlist preference whereby 309 units of County public housing would be reserved for homeless families first as they become available. LAHSA’s Coordinated Entry System (CES) evaluated each homeless family and referred them to HACoLA for housing and supportive services.

Further, HACoLA implemented several measures to leverage its partnerships and establish an effective regional approach. To address administrative barriers, HACoLA streamlined its processes for eligibility determinations in consultation with federal and County agencies, including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA), Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Department of Health Services (DHS), as well as various CBOs. This unprecedented move shifted previous modes of operation and facilitated interagency communication. HACoLA attended mobile “on the spot” lease up events to determine eligibility and issue vouchers directly in the field. Additionally, HACoLA addressed the jurisdictional boundaries that limit the housing search area. While HACoLA’s jurisdiction covers the unincorporated areas of the County and 62 participating cities, the balance of the County’s 4,084 square miles and 88 incorporated cities fall under the jurisdictions of 18 neighboring PHAs. HACoLA successfully entered into inter-jurisdictional agreements with the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena, Inglewood, Baldwin Park, Norwalk, Long Beach, Redondo Beach, and Burbank to allow HACoLA families to utilize their vouchers in those jurisdictions. HACoLA also increased its Payment Standard (the maximum amount HACoLA will pay to an owner on behalf of the family) to make families with vouchers more competitive with non-assisted families in the open rental market. Armed with a an increased payment standard, expanded coverage area, and streamlined processes, HACoLA voucher holders are better positioned to effectively lease into a unit.

HACoLA created two unprecedented programs to increase landlord acceptance of subsidized housing vouchers, the Landlord Veteran Incentive Program (VIP) and the Homeless Incentive Program (HIP). Implemented with funding provided by the Board of Supervisors as part of the County’s Homeless Initiative, the two programs address the same barriers to voucher utilization by offering a set of incentives to participating landlords. Under VIP and HIP, landlords receive one month’s free rent to consider leasing their unit to a participant, application and credit check fees, up to two month’s rent for a security deposit, and access to a damage mitigation fund. Homeless individuals and families are then assisted by the Housing Advisor Unit that facilitates the entire process and assists in locating and navigating available rental listings, provides transportation to visit units, and mediates landlord-tenant conflicts, which are all instrumental components for the success of these programs.

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Financial assistance to cover move-in costs and security deposits is provided by CBOs such as People Assisting the Homeless (PATH). As a result of this successful award-winning model, landlord incentive programs have expanded to the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena, Long Beach, Glendale, Redondo Beach, Pomona, and Burbank, with more on the rise. Each of these cities have committed their own vouchers in exchange for landlord incentive funding which will dramatically increase the number of homeless families being housed.

To market the programs, HACoLA engaged in an aggressive marketing campaign consisting of a landlord engagement series branded as HouseLA. The events were designed to recruit new landlords in each of the County's five Supervisorial Districts, and engage existing Section 8 landlords to work with the homeless population. HouseLA has been instrumental in allowing HACoLA, its partnering agencies, and elected officials to share success stories, recruit new owners, and hear concerns while working toward common solutions, all the while addressing the stigma of housing the homeless. To date, HACoLA has produced or attended over 30 outreach events, including HouseLA, and made contact with thousands of landlords. These events have gained the attention of local and national media outlets.

**Benefits:** The agency's efforts have resulted in more than 700 homeless families being housed within 18 months, and over \$2.5 million in direct incentive payments to landlords and financial assistance to families. As a result of the agency's trailblazing efforts, lease-up rates for vouchers are as follows: 97% for Section 8, 99% for veteran vouchers, and 90% for CoC. **HACoLA has also welcomed 16 homeless families, with 69 household members, into public housing units.** As HACoLA does its part to decrease the number of homeless on the streets and improve their quality of life, the programs' impact will continue to grow.

The groundbreaking homeless efforts displayed here are unique as they leverage non-federal funding to maximize the effectiveness of federally subsidized housing assistance. Equally as noteworthy is the speed with which HACoLA produced tangible results. Within weeks of receiving funding, HACoLA designed, developed, and implemented the incentive programs, which have housed hundreds of homeless individuals and families. The initiative's success is the result of an unprecedented level of commitment by HACoLA, who consulted with the County, city, CBOs, and local government agencies, to take a global and forward-thinking approach to get people into stable housing. While HACoLA recognizes that there is still much to do to end homelessness, its recent successes represent a strong foundation which the agency intends to continue building upon.

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**Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only.** Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

HACoLA’s initiatives in housing homeless veterans, individuals, and families directly address the 2016-2021 County of Los Angeles Strategic Plan. These approaches are aligned with the mission and vision of establishing services through cross-sector collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life for people and communities through effective and caring service and empowering people through knowledge and information.

Specifically, HACoLA targets Goal 1 and implements sections 1.1.2 and 1.2.1, listed below:

**Goal 1: Make Investments That Transform Lives**

We will aggressively address society’s most complicated social, health, and public safety challenges. We want to be a highly responsive organization capable of responding to complex societal problems—one person at a time.

**1.1.2 Implement a Homeless Prevention Program for High-Risk Families:**

Implement a homeless prevention program to prevent homelessness of those families, known to the County, at imminent risk of homelessness.

**1.2.1 Provide Subsidized Housing for Vulnerable Populations:**

Provide subsidized housing and necessary services for vulnerable populations, while prioritizing the homeless population.

HACoLA impacts a large number of families by providing housing assistance to over 25,000 individuals and families through Section 8 housing subsidies and housing over 6,500 public housing residents throughout Los Angeles County. HACoLA directly addresses rental housing unaffordability, the primary risk factor of homelessness, by providing subsidized housing and reducing rent cost burden for Los Angeles County’s lowest income households.

The Homeless Initiative recognizes that subsidized housing is critical in combating and preventing homelessness by utilizing and efficiently maximizing federal and local resources to enable thousands of individuals and families to afford safe, stable housing. HACoLA committed 35% of its Section 8 turnover vouchers for FY 2016 to chronically homeless individuals and families referred by various CBOs, 65% of vouchers for homeless individuals pulled from our waiting list, and ensured homeless families are given first preference for public housing units in South Los Angeles County. The supportive services provided at its public housing sites further integrates this vulnerable population.

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**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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This project is a Service Enhancement Project. While it does not provide direct financial benefits, it provides enhanced services to the public.