



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one):

- Community Health and Safety
Community Partnership
Community Sustainability
Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Riverside Landing at Delaware Place Senior Housing Complex

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Delaware, Ohio

Jurisdiction population(s): 37,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2014

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: R. Thomas Homan, ICMA-CM

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Delaware

Name:

Title: Jurisdiction:

Name:

Title: Jurisdiction:

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: R. Thomas Homan, ICMA-CM

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Delaware

Street address: 1 South Sandusky Street

City: Delaware State/Province: OH

Zip/Postal Code: 43015 Country: USA

Telephone: 740-203-1010 Fax: 740-203-1024

E-mail: rthoman@delawareohio.net

***Riverside Landing at Delaware Place: Innovative Partnership
Results in Senior Housing Where Blighted Hotel Once Stood***

I. Problem Assessment: The Challenge Prompting Program Development

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey confirmed what City of Delaware officials and local social service agencies already knew: a critical need for additional affordable and accessible rental housing to help prevent homelessness for financially and physically impaired seniors.

The City of Delaware, in a unique partnership of public and private-sector entities, used federal Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to purchase and demolish an abandoned and burned-out hotel site. This paved the way for the in-fill site's re-development as Riverside Landings at Delaware Place, much-needed senior housing which opened in 2013. By taking this action, the City of Delaware improved the quality of life for its residents, stabilized and re-established a walkable low-and moderate-income neighborhood, and addressed a pressing senior housing need at a major access point into the city.

Delaware has a population of more than 37,000 and is the county seat of Delaware County, population 174,000. According to the U.S. Census, the 60-plus population is growing faster in Delaware County than in any other county in central Ohio. In fact, in Delaware County from 2000 to 2010, the number of residents 60 or older doubled, to 25,442. The percentage of people at or below the poverty level increases dramatically with advancing age. Consequently, the number of cost-burdened renters and homeowners increased by more than 100 percent. Therefore, it was crucial that the City take the initiative addressing the need for affordable senior housing.

Before 2010, government subsidized senior housing options in the City of Delaware were limited to just 202 units in assorted facilities. And the five existing private independent living senior developments had fees as high as \$167,500 per year, not including monthly fees, pricing many seniors out of the market. This acute lack of affordable senior housing was a catalyst for the City to take action.

Opening as a Holiday Inn in the 1970s, the former Delaware Hotel was a three-story building located along U.S. 23 and a highly-visible community gateway. Over time, the hotel went into decline, abandonment and eventual foreclosure. In 2009, while the City and County were jointly in the process of securing funds to acquire and demolish the site, the hotel was furthered damaged by an arson fire. The burned structure had an even more destabilizing effect in the neighborhood. This challenge, however, presented an opportunity for innovation – to partner with other organizations on the rebirth of this site at the City’s ‘front door,’ visible from a major U.S. highway, while simultaneously addressing a lack of affordable senior housing.

II. Program Implementation and Cost

With the passage of the ‘Stimulus Bill’ (officially the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008), the State of Ohio received \$116 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Funds Round 1 (NSP1). With limited local funds available for senior housing and the City not having a formal housing authority, the City of Delaware and Delaware County took advantage of the NSP1 grant opportunity to partner on an application for the hotel’s acquisition and demolition. Where cities and counties are often at odds over priorities, both entities came to realize the shared value in removing this blighted building from the community’s front door. This collaboration was rewarded

with a \$1,136,655 grant of NSP1 funds. The City purchased the building for \$227,000 and expended \$488,000 for asbestos removal and demolition in July 2010. (The remaining \$230,000 of grant funds was used to demolish 11 other vacant and abandoned properties, thereby enhancing the positive impact of the City-County partnership.)

The City then established a redevelopment steering committee and solicited support from partner agencies, including the Delaware County Council for Older Adults, the Community Improvement Corporation, and the Delaware Area Transit Agency. Through an RFP process, the Miller-Valentine Group (MVG) from Cincinnati was selected for site redevelopment. After a highly-competitive process, MVG obtained a \$1.1 million Low Income Housing Tax Credit through the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) providing a critical “affordability” component to Delaware Place.

III. Tangible Results or Measureable Outcomes of the Program

The primary outcome of this project was the removal of a vacant and blighted structure, creating a prime in-fill development site in one of the City's low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. An innovative component of the project, adding an element of sustainability to the overall effort, was the hundreds of items from the former hotel salvaged and re-purposed – benefiting many needy families in the community: beds, lamps, mirrors, and even soap bars were donated to local nonprofit agencies; the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store received dressers, tables and wall art; and the Delaware County Fairgrounds found a use for metal shelving units.

Secondly, Riverside Landing at Delaware Place provides 63 new energy-efficient ADA-accessible rental housing units for low- and moderate-income seniors, increasing

the City's affordable housing stock by approximately 31 percent and improving needed service delivery to a vulnerable population group. It includes seven duplex villas (14 units) and 49 units in a four-story main structure that includes on-site programming and coordination with allied service agencies which originally partnered with the City and County on the NSP1 application. Immediately after opening in 2013, the \$11.5 million complex was 90-percent leased and quickly reached 100 percent occupancy, reflecting the demand for affordable senior housing and the project's excellent quality.

Today, MVG currently has a waiting list of 29 eligible seniors who desire to live in Delaware Place. As a result, MVG has partnered with the local Community Action Agency of Delaware, Madison, and Union Counties for new Phases II and III of the development, proposed for a 2016 groundbreaking. Phase II is a three-story, 44-unit building. Phase III is two-story building with commercial space, community services space for the community action agency, and 11 additional apartments.

Environmental benefits were achieved, as well. The City uncovered a collapsed storm water drain tile along the site's southern boundary and returned the flow to a more natural tributary leading to the Olentangy River, a designated Scenic Ohio Waterway. The effort improved water quality by reducing sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorous levels, and demonstrates environmental stewardship and development can co-exist.

V. Lessons Learned During Planning, Implementation, & Analysis of the Program

The primary lessons learned from this case have little to no cost associated with them; yet, they are priceless. The first lesson is the value of ongoing, proactive communication and coordination with a wide array of groups, agencies, and people.

This includes the private sector development community that ultimately is responsible for building and growing communities. This does not always pay off in immediate projects or results; but, when opportunities present themselves, longstanding relationships can make the difference between success and failure for major community-changing projects. Such associations include the City working on a continual basis with the Council for Older Adults on a wide variety of activities. The cost for “building bridges” is sometimes measured in dollars but a better measurement is a partner’s degree of willingness to proactively collaborate with a wide range of entities.

Secondly, a Comprehensive Plan with a shared vision, goals, and objectives that is citizen-driven in its development, adopted by the legislative body, and implemented by the entire community over time is critical to achieving community-changing projects. The City of Delaware has such a Comprehensive Plan. It led directly to the multi-year, incremental steps required for Delaware Place’s success.

Finally, professional leadership willing to pursue goals and objectives in the face of short-term or short-sighted opposition is critical. This happens best when there is consistent vision adopted by the legislative branch and strong, on-going relationships with community groups and allied agencies. The City of Delaware leadership has these traits, leading directly to the realization of projects such as Delaware Place.

Thus, while finances fluctuate and not all communities have significant resources or large grant opportunities, every community can engage in the above three lessons to fulfill their own long-term goals and objectives – potentially at a very low cost. This model requires effort, vision, policy support, and follow through. It is fiscally responsible and reproducible by many types and levels of government.