

# THE HUD SECRETARY'S

Opportunity & Empowerment Award

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American Planning Association  
*Creating Great Communities for All*

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 annual HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award as part of APA's 2020 National Planning Awards. The HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award recognizes excellence in planning that as a direct result of the effort demonstrates improved quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents.

## Nature of the Award

The HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award is given in partnership with the American Planning Association. 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 build social equity and empower individuals and families who reside in that community.

## Overview

Nominees must demonstrate how they have overcome difficult community issues to achieve effective measurable outcomes, such as the creation and retention of jobs, creation and/or preservation of affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income households, reduction of blight, homelessness and poverty. 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, enhance social equity, and expand opportunities for all who reside 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 nomination submitted should have been implemented or completed for a minimum of 3 years.**

## Criteria

**1. Planning.** Explain how the submission addresses a real-world challenge in the community as identified by an existing comprehensive, regional or neighborhood plan. How did the program or project integrate or maintain the cultural context and social fabric of the community? Describe the specific role planners played in achieving these results. How was the planning process sustained through the implementation stage and beyond? How involved were civic and advocacy groups, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations throughout the planning stage and beyond? (The submission must provide a detailed account of how community residents were involved in each stage of the planning process.)

**2. Results.** Describe in explicit terms, how the plan, project or program achieved measurable outcomes. Examples of outcomes include: the number of jobs created and retained; improvement in education outcomes (i.e. graduation rates); the number of affordable housing units created or preserved; a disaster mitigation plan; and a decline in the homeless, crime, and/or poverty rates. In addition, explain how outcomes are sustained and proved to be cost effective over time. The submission must include baseline data, beginning and end dates, detailed budget, and a description of savings and outcomes. For projects leveraging HUD

funding, such as HOME and CDBG, or other financing tools (i.e. Low-Income Housing Tax Credit), explain how the submission exceeds the basic requirements of these programs to achieve results.

**3. Innovation.** Describe how the submission involved an innovative or forward-looking approach that effectively addressed various community-wide needs and/or solved a perplexing problem.

**4. Equity.** Explain how the submission clearly addressed social equity through the planning process and civic engagement efforts. Describe the specific activities and efforts incorporated into the plan, program, or project that advance social equity goals. How involved was the public – particularly historically underrepresented groups – in the planning process from the initial stage to the implementation stage and beyond? Explain how the results of the plan, project, or program enhanced the quality of life for vulnerable populations, including the homeless, older persons, persons with a disability, low-income individuals and families, and veterans.

**5. Transferability.** How, and to what extent, has the submission served as an example for other localities working to address challenges? How does the program provide useful prescriptive measures for other communities addressing a similar challenge? How well does the submission demonstrate that the project overcame challenges to implement a successful program where the results are sustained over time?

## Eligibility

This competition is open to APA members and nonmembers.

## Judging and Awards Ceremony

Judging for the HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award will take place in November 2019. The award presentation will be made at APA's 2020 National Planning Awards luncheon ceremony, which will take place during the 2020 National Planning Conference in Houston, April 25–28, 2020. 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 2020 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/](http://www.planning.org/awards/). The online application form will be available beginning August 21, 2019. The deadline for completing submissions is 5 p.m. (central) September 6, 2019.

## The online form requests the following information:

- » A 2020 HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award nomination form that includes the name of the entry and

name and contact information of the person submitting the nomination.

- » A summary of the entry (up to 150 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, or provide web links to these items.)

## 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 2020 HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award, along with the online nomination form, is available on the APA website ([www.planning.org/awards/](http://www.planning.org/awards/)).

If you have questions or need additional information, contact APA Awards Program manager Roberta Rewers by e-mail, [rewers@planning.org](mailto:rewers@planning.org), or by phone, 312-786-6395.

## Deadline

**APA must receive completed entries and all accompanying materials by Friday, September 6, 2019 at 5 p.m. (central). Any entries submitted after this date will not be eligible.**