



COUNTY LAUDED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEADERSHIP

FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF ORANGE COUNTY RECOGNIZES H&CD AT THE FAIR HOUSING LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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(Santa Ana, CA) – The County of Orange Housing and Community Development Department (H&CD) received an Affordable Housing Leadership Award and gained national recognition at the 3rd Annual Fair Housing Leadership Awards Luncheon presented by the Fair Housing Council of Orange County. Held Friday, April 25, 2003 at the Robert Mondavi Food & Wine Center in Costa Mesa, California, H&CD was honored as an organization that has made significant contributions to support the spirit and letter of Fair Housing laws, including the creation of more affordable housing opportunities.

H&CD was the winner in the nonprofit category for promoting Fair Housing issues in the organization's 2002 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process which funds the development of affordable housing. In 1999, in response to state and national reports ranking Orange County as one of the least affordable housing markets in the country, the Orange County Board of Supervisors directed H&CD to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy to identify the underlying causes and assist the County in developing strategies in response to the housing crisis. The identification of affordable housing issues and needs gave H&CD the ability to focus its resources and to better assist the development community and potential city partners in the creation of affordable housing and furthering fair housing issues. Since the 2002 NOFA process, H&CD, through Board of Supervisor approval, has approved funding for the creation of nearly 1,500 new affordable rental units for low-income families, seniors, and persons with special needs, many in partnership with cities. In all instances, adherence to fair housing laws and educating staff, the public, and development community on fair housing practices is emphasized.

"H&CD's funding process has become more open, accessible, and opportunity driven," declared Supervisor Tom Wilson, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. "The innovative ways employed to develop affordable housing has been very successful and, at the same time, continues H&CD's commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing in Orange County."

H&CD has timed its funding process to coincide with the needs of the development community. By timing its approval process H&CD paved the way for developers needing local funding commitments to increase their competitiveness for tax credits, bonds and other sources of financing. This enabled the County to further leverage its funds. \$20,414,522 million in H&CD funding has been leveraged to create \$226,626,010 in total construction activity. Through this process H&CD has become a regional housing finance agency, partnering with any city in Orange County to assist development and provide information.

"Even in these tight budgetary times, the County of Orange is dedicated to increasing affordable housing opportunities," declared Paula Burrier-Lund, H&CD Director. "The leveraging of public funds to create affordable housing units for our residents and the resulting construction activity is key to keeping Orange County's economy strong and the County a desirable place to live."

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