

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Asheville
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Asheville's City-Agency Collaboration Wins National HUD Award

The City of Asheville Homeless Coalition, Homeward Bound and the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium were honored by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development on May 2, 2011 with a HOME program 20th Anniversary "Door Knocker Award".

Homeward Bound's Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program, "Pathways to Permanent Housing" was chosen as one of fourteen programs nationally to receive the award. HUD Assistant Secretary Mercedes Márquez said, in announcing the award, "The Pathways to Permanent Housing program demonstrates how HOME funds can be used successfully to assist communities reaching underserved populations."

"I am proud of the City of Asheville and Homeward Bound; this is a well-deserved award. Homeward Bound has shown an incredible dedication to implementing the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and has made a real impact on the lives of people in our community," said Mayor Terry Bellamy.

Homeward Bound's collaborative and innovative programs incorporate important community resources, services, and funds to offer people who are experiencing chronic homelessness an opportunity to move off the streets and into housing. HOME funds are used to make rent payments for persons who had formerly experienced chronic homelessness. Homeward Bound and the Consortium have learned that "housing first" strengthens the ability of these persons to stabilize their lives, leading to personal gains and the reduction in need of many other community services.

"Homelessness is solvable, and housing is the answer; our 10-Year Plan says that's true, Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness says that's true, and we've found through experience that that's true," said Brian Alexander, Executive Director of Homeward Bound. "Both we and the City of Asheville believe that effective stewardship of public resources means investing in solutions to homelessness, and that's what we've done together through Pathways to Permanent Housing. Being recognized for that by HUD is an honor for each of us

and is something our community should be proud of and should see as encouragement to continue investing in those solutions.”

This prestigious award is just one of fourteen given nationally and recognizes the dedicated partnership between the City of Asheville, the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium and community agencies like Homeward Bound. Asheville and Consortium have participated in the federal HOME program since its inception in 1991. HOME funds are allocated annually by HUD specifically to help communities create and retain affordable housing. It is the largest federal block grant program dedicated to producing affordable housing at the state and local level. The Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, comprised of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties, and managed by the City of Asheville Community Development Division has been recognized by HUD as a model for other multi-county HOME consortiums.

Amy Sawyer, the City’s Homeless Initiative Coordinator, and Brian Alexander, attended HUD’s 20th Anniversary Conference to accept the award from Assistant Secretary Mercedes Márquez on May 2, 2011. The main focus of the conference was on helping HUD partners strengthen their affordable housing programs. During the conference, Ms. Sawyer and Mr. Alexander gave a presentation on best practices for tenant based rental assistance.

For more information on the City of Asheville’s disbursement of Tenant-Based Rental Assistance or the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, contact Amy Sawyer, Homeless Initiative Coordinator, at (828) 552.9198 or asawyer@ashevillenc.gov. To learn more about Homeward Bound’s programming, contact Emily Ball at (828) 258.1695 x258 or emily@hbofa.org, or visit www.hbofa.org.

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