The Community Development Commission/Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (CDC/HACoLA), Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning, Los Angeles County Public Works, and Los Angeles County Arts Commission partnered to launch the County’s Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program as a means of exploring opportunities for homeowners to construct housing for homeless families and individuals on private property.

The agencies held a series of events during April and May 2018, to help raise awareness of ADUs as a possible solution to homelessness. On April 27, 2018, the Arts Commission hosted a meeting to award winners of the design competition and exhibition. The design competition was aimed at demonstrating the importance of ADUs as an affordable housing strategy, exploring the role of design in creating cost savings, and conceptuatizing the feasibility of ADUs. The competition was open to architects, engineers, designers, artists, and students. At least one member of the proposal team was required to reside, work, study, or teach in Los Angeles County. The series of events culminated on May 24, 2018 with a panel of experts discussing innovative solutions to building ADUs, current building codes, design proposals, as well as engineering and construction best practices.

The CDC/HACoLA is tasked with selecting the six homeowners to participate in the Pilot Program, overseeing funding of the three new construction ADUs, and the rehabilitation of three ADUs. The “Yes to ADU” series was an effective contribution to ending the homelessness crisis in the County.

For more information on the County’s ADU Pilot Program, visit http://planning.lacounty.gov/secondunitpilot
On June 4, 2018, a group of mothers from the South Whittier community completed a six-week series of workshops entitled Futuros Radiantes (Bright Futures), a program developed by the Discovery Cube Science Center and offered at the Community Resource Center (CRC). The group of mothers eagerly learned and practiced how to assist their pre-school-aged children to become school ready.

Bright Futures is designed for low-income parents with children under the age of six. The goal is to help them guide their children to develop more complex language skills in English and Spanish, understand number sense, prepare young learners to successfully enter school, and ultimately become productive and problem solving learners.

During the weekly one-hour hands-on workshops, parents were provided a themed book and craft activities that were used to learn about the Common Core State Standards English and Mathematics learning goals that outline what a student should be able to do at the end of each grade. The curriculum also covered Next Generation Science Standards, as well as indicators of academic success for young learners.

Each week, participants received a copy of a lesson plan, asked questions, and interacted with other parents to share the impact of the strategies they were putting into practice at home. By increasing parents’ understanding of how young children learn, participants were better equipped to help their own children become developmentally ready to succeed in school and life.

Upon completion of the workshop, the parents received free admission tickets to the Discovery Cube Science Center, children’s books, and craft supplies to bring science and math activities into their home.

FROM L.A. TO D.C.: MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD!

From May 21-24, 2018, Executive Director Monique King-Viehland, Deputy Executive Director Emilio Salas, and Communications and Public Affairs Manager Elisa Vásquez, traveled to Washington D.C., for the agency’s annual advocacy visit. The successful trip focused on introducing the agency’s newly appointed Executive Director to the County’s Congressional and Senate representatives, such as Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard pictured to the left; meeting with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Offices of Public and Indian Housing and Community and Planning Development to discuss regulatory reform; and advocating against the proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 budget cuts to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Programs, and Public Housing Capital Fund.
On June 21, 2018, officials from the CDC/HACoLA helped celebrate the grand opening of Mosaic Gardens at Westlake (Mosaic Gardens), a 125-unit affordable housing development developed by LINC Housing Corporation. Mosaic Gardens provides affordable housing for chronically homeless and homeless households, including those who are frequent users of the Los Angeles County healthcare system, as well as low-income seniors and families. The CDC/HACoLA provided $1.6 million in Affordable Housing Trust Funds for the acquisition, construction, and permanent financing of the project.

Mosaic Gardens includes 63 units reserved for chronically homeless and homeless households, who are frequent users of the County’s healthcare system. Additionally, 35 units are reserved for low-income seniors, 25 units for low-income families, and two units are reserved for onsite managers. The People Concern serves as the lead service provider for the special needs units and LINC Cares will provide an onsite resident service coordinator to serve all residents at the property.

Mosaic Gardens features two multi-story towers. The first tower, a five-story building above two stories of subterranean parking, includes a community room with kitchen, two open courtyards, laundry facilities, and an elevator. The second tower, a four-story building for seniors above one story of subterranean parking, includes a community room, a central courtyard, laundry facilities, and an elevator. The complex also features a community garden, computer lab, health and wellness room, fitness center, playground, offices for case management, and a roof deck with views of downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood Hills.

Mosaic Gardens includes 15 units for mobility-impaired residents and eight units for sensory-impaired residents. All of the units in the senior building have universal design features that will enhance the quality of life for seniors, allowing residents to age in place. The development is pursuing LEED for Homes Platinum Certification and will exceed state energy efficiency requirements by 31% through the inclusion of a variety of green building features, including drought-tolerant landscaping, high-efficiency and dual flush toilets, ENERGY STAR appliances, fans, and lighting.
In April 2018, HUD, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), awarded the CDC/HACoLA 600 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers. This HUD-VASH award represents the largest voucher allocation awarded to a Public Housing Agency (PHA) in the country during FFY 2017, and is the largest HUD-VASH voucher allocation ever received by CDC/HACoLA.

With Los Angeles’ ongoing need, and the agency’s efforts to secure the maximum resources to assist the County’s homeless veterans, in September 2017, CDC/HACoLA applied for 600 vouchers. Given the County’s exemplary use of its previous allocations, HUD accommodated the CDC/HACoLA, fulfilling the complete request and bringing the agency’s total VASH voucher allocation to 2,394 to date.

The Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System screens applicants for program eligibility and service needs and refers them to the CDC/HACoLA for rental assistance through HUD-VASH. Nationwide, the VA is focused on increasing the number of chronically homeless veterans served through HUD-VASH. The program targets chronically homeless veterans with mental or physical health problems, substance use disorders, and limited access to other social supports. Other veterans who are homeless with diminished functional capacity and need for case management are also eligible for the program.

COUNTY CO-HOSTS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The City of Long Beach and the CDC/HACoLA were proud to co-host the 2018 National Community Development Association (NCDA) Conference, an event gathering community development professionals from across the country to discuss the latest federal policies and issues affecting community development in cities and county governments nationwide. The NCDA Conference, held June 13 through June 16, 2018 highlighted the investments made through the CDBG and HOME Programs, and focused on critical federal housing and community and economic development programs.

“We were honored to co-host the 49th Annual NCDA Conference with the City of Long Beach and meet with community development leaders from across the nation,” said Monique King-Viehland, Executive Director of the CDC/HACoLA. “The conference provided an opportunity to exchange ideas on how to optimize our collective efforts in building and revitalizing the communities we serve.”

Keynote speakers included Patrick Sullivan, President of the NCDA, Vicki Watson, Executive Director of the NCDA, Monique King-Viehland, and Linda F. Tatum, FAICP, Director of Long Beach Development Services. Participants learned about the joint efforts of the City of Long Beach and the County of Los Angeles to address the nationwide challenges of homelessness and affordable housing, and the vital role that federal funding plays in these critical efforts.