On May 18, 2016, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles joined Los Angeles County Third District Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti’s office, LA Family Housing, and Brilliant Corners to host HouseLA, an outreach event for landlords in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys.

Over 200 landlords were in attendance to learn about the new incentive programs offered throughout the County to help end homelessness. In addition, Supervisor Kuehl recognized landlords that currently partner with County, City, and non-profit service providers as “Blue Ribbon Landlords” for their commitment to participating in subsidized housing programs.

HACoLA took the opportunity to introduce its new Homeless Incentive Program (HIP), an initiative similar to the Landlord Veteran Incentive Program (Landlord VIP) launched in January 2016. HIP has four main components that encourage landlord acceptance of subsidized tenants, including:

**Holding Fee:** Incentivizes landlords to rent housing units to homeless individuals and families by offering one month’s free rent to hold available units while applicants are referred.

**Move-In Assistance:** Provides move-in assistance such as security deposit, utility assistance, and furniture essentials.

**Handy Worker Improvements:** Provides landlords with assistance to make minor repairs to comply with Housing Quality Standards.

**Damage Claim:** Provides financial assistance to landlords to mitigate damage caused by tenants during their occupancy.

“We are hopeful that these outreach efforts extend to a larger scope of landlords and ultimately result in more available units to alleviate the homeless crisis in Los Angeles County,” said Sean Rogan, HACoLA Executive Director. Funding for the HIP comes from Los Angeles County’s Homeless Initiative. HACoLA plans to host additional landlord events in collaboration with partner agencies to promote new County programs aimed at ending homelessness.
On May 4, 2016, the Community Development Commission (CDC) celebrated the grand opening of Gateway Apartments, a multifamily affordable housing development located in Marina del Rey. The development provides 21 permanent supportive housing units for very low- and extremely low-income individuals who are chronically homeless, homeless, and mentally and/or physically disabled.

Venice Community Housing Corporation partnered with Hollywood Community Housing Corporation to develop Gateway Apartments which features a ground floor community room, covered parking for cars and bicycles, and a rooftop deck with an edible garden. The four-story residential building is designed to complement the surrounding Marina del Rey neighborhood.

The CDC supported the project with $3 million in acquisition and permanent financing using Affordable Housing Trust Funds. The funds were dedicated to creating 15 of the 21 units, all of which are reserved for chronically homeless or homeless individuals who are mentally and/or physically disabled.

Sean Rogan, CDC Executive Director said, “Residents at the Gateway Apartments have the opportunity to start fresh, with a stable home, and the resources needed to empower themselves for a better future, right at their doorsteps.”

St. Joseph’s Center (SJC) provides onsite services such as mental health, substance abuse, medication management, housing placement, attendant care, benefits education, transportation planning, and green education workshops. Further, SJC engages with each tenant and jointly develops individualized plans for personal success through a culinary training program, life skills training, and coordination of social activities.

On April 4, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors honored two HACoLA Public Housing residents during the 34th Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards, themed “Volunteers Link Communities.” The award recipients were recognized for their hard work, generosity, and philanthropic service to Los Angeles County.

Ms. Ruthie Myers is a Resident Council Board Member and Secretary at the South Bay Gardens Senior Public Housing development in South Los Angeles, which is owned and operated by HACoLA. Ms. Myers was recognized for her can-do attitude and ensuring her neighbors are connected to available resources. Ms. Myers started a food program, in which she cooks healthy meals weekly for those who cannot cook for themselves. In order to promote community involvement, she instituted fundraisers to assist with field trips to the Aquarium of the Pacific and the Ports of Call in San Pedro. Thanks to her initiative, seniors are given the opportunity to experience social activities as a community.

Ms. Renee Contreras is the Secretary Board Member for HACoLA’s Nueva Maravilla Public Housing Development Resident Council, Organización de Residentes de Nueva Maravilla, located in East Los Angeles. She has devoted over 120 hours to help her neighbors participate in ongoing community events. During the holidays, Ms. Contreras volunteered to stuff gift and food bags, sort donations, and was instrumental in distributing gifts to 150 seniors. Ms. Contreras is a full-time grandmother who balances her family responsibilities with her dedication to giving her community a helping hand. Ms. Contreras attributes her compassion and commitment to her grandmother who raised her and ingrained in her the importance of creating a strong community.
Construction on New Artesia Library is Underway

Construction of the new Artesia Library is well underway. The $12.2 million dollar project, funded by the office of Los Angeles County Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe, is being managed by the CDC’s Construction Management Unit with input from the City of Artesia and the Los Angeles County Public Library. The new 10,850 square-foot library will replace the existing 5,100 square-foot, 46 year old County library.

During the normal course of predevelopment due diligence, poor soil conditions were discovered through geotechnical testing. A deep foundation system and related site construction work were required to address these unforeseen conditions. In April 2016, the general contractor, Morillo Construction, began drilling holes for concrete piles. By May 2016, a total of 50 (up to 60-foot deep) Cast-In-Drilled-Hole (CIDH) concrete piles that will serve as the foundation system for the new building were fully installed.

The new library is designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) minimum Silver Rating, and will contain many sustainable technologies including permeable paving, high reflective roofing, and drought-tolerant landscaping. Solar panels will be carefully integrated and designed into the building, providing an alternative onsite energy source. The use of non-chlorofluorocarbon based refrigerants in the cooling system will help protect the ozone layer, adding to the many attributes that make the library an environmentally responsible addition to the community. Once completed, in the fall of 2017, the County of Los Angeles Public Library will operate the facility.

The Path to Citizenship

Deciding to become a U.S. citizen can be a very important milestone in an immigrant’s life. On Saturday, April 9, 2016, the Community Resource Center (CRC) hosted a Naturalization Workshop in partnership with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) to help guide local residents along that path.

On the day of the event, applicants first responded to an extensive 30-45 minute eligibility survey, then proceeded to an intake station staffed by Board of Immigration Agency certified advocates who conducted a two-hour interview to complete their applications. After the application and supporting documents were packaged, CARECEN staff attorneys reviewed the documents and provided the client feedback or ensured that the application was ready to submit to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

CARECEN received funding from the USCIS to assist legal residents by completing applications, confidential fee waivers, and naturalization eligibility consultations, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals eligibility and renewals, naturalization form preparation assistance, and provide evening citizenship classes to the residents of the Southeast region of Los Angeles County.

Becoming a U.S. citizen means an improved quality of life - more opportunities, freedom, as well as protections from the government and an overall sense of security. As one South Whittier resident, said “Today’s workshop will provide me the opportunity to vote and make my voice heard!”
Annually, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) hosts its Washington Conference where attendees can learn the latest on housing and community development regulatory and legislative issues. During the week of April 11, 2016, the Executive Director, both Deputy Executive Directors, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, HACoLA staff, and Housing Commissioners, traveled to Arlington, Virginia, and Washington D.C., to attend the conference.

This year’s theme, Keeping America’s Promise, resonated throughout the conference as speakers presented information on topics such as: key times throughout the year to fight for housing and community development programs; legislative and regulatory priorities for 2016; news from Capitol Hill, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the White House; voucher program updates; and HUD’s regulatory implementation of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule.

In addition to representing the CDC/HACoLA, staff used this opportunity to convene with members of the California Association of Housing Authorities (CAHA), a professional organization representing 62 housing authorities throughout the state. As active CAHA members, HACoLA teamed up with other California housing authorities to attend meetings with state delegates to advocate on issues affecting housing practitioners.

Following the conference, staff met with members of Los Angeles County’s Congressional delegation, HUD officials, and others to share the agency’s best practices, advocate for continued or restored funding for the County’s most important legislative priorities, and express appreciation for the support received for CDC/HACoLA programs.