

# )) PRESSRELEASE

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## **WHA earns multiple awards for resident programs** *Summer camps, food programs for residents celebrated*

**WORCESTER, Massachusetts** –The Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) has much to celebrate, having recently earned multiple prestigious awards that highlight the agency’s exceptional resident service programs. These recognitions, coupled with WHA’s continued excellence in public housing performance, are a testament to the organization’s dedication to its residents and the broader Worcester community.

At the First Annual Awards Gala Dinner hosted by the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (MassNAHRO) on Wednesday, October 9, WHA was honored with the Outstanding Public Housing Agency Award. This recognition highlighted WHA’s exceptional Summer Camp and Food Matters programs, which serve hundreds of residents by providing enriching experiences for youth and addressing food insecurity for families. The gala, held at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood, also featured Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and honored Massachusetts Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities, Ed Augustus, as the 2024 Hero of Housing.

Adding to this celebration, Nan McKay Associates, Inc. presented WHA with its Resident Service Award (Large Agency) on Friday, October 11, further acknowledging the remarkable impact of the agency’s food programs. These accolades arrive shortly after WHA was named a “high performer” for the 10th consecutive year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through its Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS).

***“Everything we do at the WHA is about improving the lives of our residents and uplifting the larger Worcester community,”*** said WHA CEO Alex Corrales. ***“To be recognized for our efforts by our peers across the public housing industry is a profound honor. I am incredibly proud of our staff, who work tirelessly to fulfill our mission of creating safe, affordable housing while empowering our residents toward self-sufficiency. These awards reflect their unwavering dedication.”***

The MassNAHRO Outstanding Public Housing Agency Award celebrates WHA’s Summer Camp and Food Matters programs. The summer camps, organized in partnership with community organizations, offered six different camps this past summer, benefiting hundreds of WHA children. These camps included collaborations with the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, Girls Inc., Mass Audubon, and City Hoops, which was offered for the first time this year. The Food Matters program, which delivers culturally diverse, shelf-stable meals to more than 2,500 residents each month, plays a vital role in combatting food insecurity in the community.

The Nan McKay Resident Service Award recognized WHA's comprehensive food initiatives, which go beyond Food Matters to include partnerships with the Regional Environmental Council (REC) for mobile food markets, community gardens, and a pilot Community Fridge Program. WHA also operates an emergency food pantry and mobile farmers markets, further enhancing food access for its residents.

***"These food programs make a tremendous difference in the lives of our residents,"*** Corrales continued. ***"Food Matters is the cornerstone of our efforts to ensure families don't go hungry. The recognition from Nan McKay Associates highlights the critical work we do every day to address food insecurity in our communities."***

Earlier in October, WHA announced its recognition as a HUD "high performer," receiving an impressive 90 out of 100 in the annual Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). WHA earned perfect scores in management and capital fund indicators, reaffirming its commitment to high standards of performance and continuous improvement.

***"We take immense pride in meeting and exceeding the rigorous inspections and reviews required at both the state and federal levels,"*** Corrales said. ***"This recognition from HUD speaks volumes about our commitment to excellence. While we celebrate our achievements, we remain focused on the future, with numerous exciting developments underway that will further enhance the lives of our residents."***

WHA extends its heartfelt thanks to MassNAHRO, Nan McKay Associates, and HUD for their recognition, as well as to its valued partners at the local, state, and national levels for their unwavering support. Together, WHA continues to lead the way in providing safe, affordable housing and fostering a community where residents can thrive.

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