

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCE

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## 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

34 finalists chosen as the top developments of 2014–2015





# 2015 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

*Thirty-four inspiring affordable housing developments vie for your vote as the best*

**BY DONNA KIMURA, CHRISTINE SERLIN, AND LINDSAY MACHAK**

A community for formerly homeless veterans in Syracuse, N.Y., an old Pillsbury flour mill reimaged as affordable apartments for artists in Minneapolis, and a development focused on school district employees in Los Angeles are among the 34 outstanding developments selected as finalists in AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCE's 11th annual Readers' Choice Awards competition.

This year's finalists were selected from 112 nominations from across the country and were chosen for their impact, creative problem solving, and inventiveness. To qualify, projects were completed in 2014 or will be completed this year.

Located in 16 states and Washington, D.C., the developments are home to working families, seniors, the disabled,

and formerly homeless individuals.

Read about each of the finalists on the following pages, and then vote to select the most deserving project in nine categories, as well as one overall winner. This year, AHF recognizes four projects in a new category, Public Housing Redevelopment.

Visit the link at [www.housingfinance.com](http://www.housingfinance.com) to vote. Profiles and slide shows of the projects will also appear online. Voting takes place between July 13 and Aug. 14 and is restricted to AHF magazine and newsletter subscribers as of July 1.

The winning developments will be announced in September and honored at AHF Live: The 2015 Affordable Housing Developers Summit, Nov. 18–20, at the Fairmont Millennium Park in Chicago.



ANDREW THOMAS RYAN

Bristol Commons/Lenox Green, Taunton, Mass. See page 20.

**Public Housing Redevelopment Finalists**

## Bristol Commons and Lenox Green

An obsolete, 150-unit public housing development notorious for drug dealing and crime in Taunton, Mass., has been transformed into a vibrant mixed-income community by developers Trinity Financial and Taunton Housing Authority (THA).

Funded in part with a HOPE VI grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the THA, the \$71.7 million redevelopment, which was completed in December, includes Bristol Commons, 88 units of townhome and duplex units on the original Fairfax Gardens site, as well as Lenox Green, 72 units on a separate lot purchased from the city about five miles away.

The new community offers a range of building façades as well as new infrastructure to connect residents to the surrounding neighborhood. A new community building, with day care, after-school programs, and community space, serves as a focal point. Ample outdoor space also has been provided.

“We also made a concerted effort to give everyone their own front doors and backyards in the townhouses, as well as in the lower floor of the mid-rise at Lenox Green,” says Mathieu Zahler, Trinity Financial’s project manager for Bristol Commons and Lenox Green. “These elements work together to make the community safe and secure.”



**Developers:** Trinity Financial and Taunton Housing Authority

**Architect:** The Architectural Team

**Major Funders:** RBC Capital Markets - Tax Credit Equity Group; JPMorgan Chase; Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Department of Housing and Urban Development; city of Taunton; Taunton Housing Authority; Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development; MassDevelopment

Bristol Commons provides 59 public housing units, 10 market-rate units, and 19 units with Sec. 8 project-based vouchers, while Lenox Green provides 44

public housing units, 10 units for households earning no more than 60% of the area median income, and 18 units with project-based vouchers. —C.S.

## Dorchester Art+Housing Collaborative



**Developers:** Brinshore Development and Rebuild Foundation

**Architect:** Landon Bone Baker Architects

**Major Funders:** RedStone Equity Partners; JPMorgan Chase; IFF; Royal Bank of Scotland; Fallbrook Credit Finance; city of Chicago; Chicago Housing Authority; Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago

Art and public housing redevelopment are being showcased in Chicago’s Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood.

Brinshore Development and Rebuild Foundation, a non-

profit that focuses on culturally driven redevelopment in undersourced communities, have partnered to create Dorchester Art+Housing Collaborative, the first arts-focused, mixed-

income public housing redevelopment in the nation.

The partners transformed an abandoned, 36-unit public housing development into 32 mixed-income rental units and a new arts center. Twelve public housing units are reserved for families at 50% of the area median income (AMI). With a preference for artists, 11 units are set aside for households earning no more than 60% of the AMI, and nine are market rate. About half the units have been leased to artists, who have agreed to provide community service to the project.

Volunteer artists from the development and local arts organizations are providing programming, including dance

classes, art workshops, and music lessons, to the residents and surrounding community. The art center, a glass-and-steel, two-story building in the center of the development, also is a statement piece for the neighborhood.

“Seven days a week, the art center has activities. It’s doing what it sought to do, and it’s become a real anchor for the neighborhood,” says Peter Levavi, Brinshore’s senior vice president.

The \$11.8 million development, which celebrated its grand opening in November, was financed primarily with low-income housing tax credits and Chicago Housing Authority capital funds. —C.S.