



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2020**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARDS: ALL**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOODS USA, 2020 BEST NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM OF THE**  
**YEAR AWARDS**

**ISSUE:**

Receive and file a report on the Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) Best Neighborhood Program of the Year Awards.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council receive and file a report on the Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) Best Neighborhood Program of the Year Awards.

**BACKGROUND:**

Created in 1975 to share information and experiences used to build stronger communities, Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) encourages networking and information-sharing to facilitate the development of partnerships among neighborhood organizations, government, and the private sector for the ultimate goal of strengthening every neighborhood.

City staff is committed to strengthening the Riverside community and has been attending and presenting workshops at NUSA conferences for several years, bringing back best practices and ideas for our neighborhood programs as well as sharing information about the programs we have implemented. Each year, NUSA solicits nominations to recognize the commitment of neighborhood endeavors, actions, and neighborhood-friendly individuals or enterprises by awarding its Neighborhood of the Year, Best Neighborhood Program, Neighborhood Newsletter and Who's Who in America's Neighborhoods awards.

**DISCUSSION:**

NUSA's Neighborhood of the Year award has been presented since 1984 for the hard work of nominated neighborhoods and are the only national awards given on an ongoing basis to neighborhood organizations for their self-help initiatives. The Best Neighborhood Program of the Year awards are a way for NUSA to recognize outstanding government entities and businesses for their work in improving the quality of life in their communities. The Neighborhood Newsletter

competition awards excellence in community print and electronic newsletters. The Who's Who in America's Neighborhoods award recognizes individuals whose work mirrors the mission of Neighborhoods USA: to build and strengthen neighborhood associations, to encourage neighborhood involvement in the decision-making process in local governments; and to promote productive communities and collaborations between neighborhood associations, local governments and the public/private sector.

This year, and for the first time, the City of Riverside's Community & Economic Development - Neighborhood Engagement Division submitted Best Neighborhood Program of the Year nominations for two programs in two separate categories and brought home National Recognition for their work. The categories included:

- Social Revitalization/Neighborliness: Programs focusing on the social or cultural aspect of a neighborhood, like safety, youth and/or senior programs, including activities that make neighbors feel connected and foster neighbors working together on programs.

Riverside was awarded First Place for our Neighbor Fest event, an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) training re-imagined into an interactive event design like a street-fair. Booths with activities engage community to identify the assets and resources within their neighborhoods and themselves that can be built upon to create a neighborhood strategy that advances the goals of the community.

- Physical Revitalization/Beautification: programs that focus on physical aspects of improving neighborhoods, such as parks, lighting, litter control, traffic management, housing improvements, green spaces and business district enhancements.

Riverside also won First Place for its Small Sparks Neighborhood Matching Grant program, which provides cash to match community contributions of volunteer labor, donated professional services or materials, or cash donations in support of neighborhood-based, self-help projects.

Award recipients are typically announced during a special recognition breakfast or lunch at the annual NUSA conference. Although the conference was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, conference organizers invited all finalists to be a part of a Zoom meeting to announce this year's winners. Riverside was the only agency that received multiple awards.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: David Welch, Community & Economic Development Director  
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation