



Congratulations to the 2014 All-America Cities!

The National Civic League announced the ten All-America Cities tonight during a celebration at the Grand Hyatt Denver. The award is given to communities for outstanding civic accomplishments. This year had a focus on healthy communities—efforts to address challenges such as obesity, chronic illness, physical inactivity and the need for safe routes to school and walkable communities.

Listed alphabetically by state, the 2014 All-America Cities are:

Montgomery, Alabama
San Pablo, California
Brush!, Colorado
Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Chelsea, Massachusetts
Independence, Oregon
Brownsville, Texas
Hampton, Virginia
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

[Click here for summaries of their award winning projects.](#)

For two days, groups of civic leaders and community activists met in Denver to present their stories of positive change to a jury of civic experts and to network and exchange ideas and insights.

“Congratulations on a job well done,” said Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock in a message to the All-America Cities. “Not only have you proven your ability to innovate, work together and take on the complex challenges facing America’s communities, you’ve given inspiration and ideas to other communities across the country.”

The 2014 All-America Cities applied grassroots efforts to address such issues as childhood obesity, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, greenway development. They engaged the public directly in budget-making, city planning and communitywide fitness programs. They promoted local arts and cultural opportunities, reduced high school drop-out rates and turned polluted brownfields into parks.

“These communities are amazing,” said National Civic League President Gloria Rubio-Cortés. “They deserve to be recognized for the great work they are doing to make their communities stronger, healthier and more inclusive. They have found innovative ways of aligning existing programs to achieve greater impact.”

Sponsors of the 2014 All-America City Awards are Southwest Airlines, The Official Airline of the All-America City Awards; Campaign for Grade-Level Reading; Colorado Health Foundation; The Colorado Trust; Kaiser Permanente Denver/Boulder Offices; Alameda Gateway Community Association; Delta Dental of Colorado; FirstBank; Greenberg Traurig; Mile High United Way; PCL Construction; St. Anthony Hospital; City of Aurora, Colorado; City and County of Denver, Colorado; City of Lakewood, Colorado; City of Dublin, California; City of Gladstone, Missouri; City of Rancho Cordova, California; City of Hickory, North Carolina; and RubinBrown

San Pablo, California

Health Element

Faced with a childhood obesity crisis and the highest cancer rate in Contra Costa County, San Pablo embraced a collective vision to address health disparities, becoming the first city in California to add an optional health-conscious planning element—Health Element—to its General Plan. Representatives from all sectors of the community participated in the development of the Health Element, which was adopted in 2011 and focuses on a variety of factors affecting health, including access to health services, nutrition and the quality of physical environments. Residents, nonprofit organizations and government entities formed the Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force, which collaborates with stakeholders to develop strategies that encourage the community to “Eat Smart, Get Moving.” To increase access to healthier foods and provide a safe gathering place on the weekends, the city established the San Pablo Farmer’s Market. In recognition of the need for healthy activity and mobility for residents of all ages, the city conducted the San Pablo Avenue Complete Streets Study, funded by a Caltrans Environmental Justice Transportation Planning Grant for \$6.2 million, which seeks to improve multimodal access and safety along a busy regional corridor. Additional outcomes of the Health Element include the construction of the West County Health Clinic, which led to increased access to health care services and the creation of about 200 new jobs, and the development of recreational spaces to reduce crime and provide opportunities for physical activity.

San Pablo Economic Development Corporation

In response to challenging economic circumstances, the city established and funded the San Pablo Economic Development Corporation (SPEDC) to create jobs while shifting the needle toward workforce and business development. Their efforts have contributed to a significant decrease in unemployment—from 22 percent in 2009 to 13.1 percent in 2013—and helped people move away from underemployment through skills-building certification programs. The SPEDC manages partner job training programs with Contra Costa Community College, RichmondBUILD, the Stride Center and Moler Barber College, focusing on areas of the economy that are either stable or growing and pay a living wage or provide a pathway to better earnings. Training includes both hard and soft skills. In 2013, the SPEDC partnered with the city and New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal to launch an innovative program, Removing Barriers, a multi-purpose job readiness and adult tattoo removal program that removes visible and skills-related barriers to employment. On the business development front, the SPEDC works to stabilize, diversify and develop the local economy through the education and training of its business and workforce, with partners offering a broad range of services to help businesses achieve revenue targets and increase in size, adding local jobs as a result.

San Pablo Police Department Community Partnership Programs

The San Pablo Police Department engages in a variety of community partnership programs to reduce crime and strengthen the community's perception of safety, with a majority of the programs focused on youth, many of whom otherwise would fall victim to gang violence. The Youth and Education Services Unit provides classes to elementary school students to create positive experiences with police and teach ways of avoiding drugs and gangs. The unit also includes the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program for sixth-grade students, with top graduates being recognized at the police department's annual community awards dinner. In addition to youth outreach programs, the police department strives to engage the public through other programs—many offered in English and Spanish to better serve the community—that focus on emergency and disaster response skills, among other areas. To further strengthen the bonds between the community and the San Pablo Police Department while also reducing crime, bike and foot patrols have been implemented. The success of these public partnership programs is reflected by the city's 2013 crime statistics, which reveal that, for the first time since 1986, the city had zero homicides, and experienced significant crime reduction in every category of reportable crime compared to 2012.