



Nonprofit Receives Grant to Promote “Resiliency” at its Independence, MO Affordable Housing Community

Preservation of Affordable Housing will implement Resilient Communities model at its 45-unit Hawthorne Apartments development

Kansas City, MO - National nonprofit housing developer Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), which owns 1,538 affordable apartments in Missouri, is one of six winners of a [Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge](#) grant from [Enterprise Community Partners](#) (Enterprise) and [Wells Fargo](#) to find the most innovative and scalable solutions to increase housing affordability across the U.S..

POAH will implement its breakthrough Trauma-Resilient Communities project - a collaborative, human-centered process whose goal is to deliver trauma-informed resident care within affordable rental housing - at a Missouri family housing development - the 745-unit **Hawthorne Apartments in Independence**. POAH will receive \$2 million in grant funding and two years of technical assistance valued at \$500,000, facilitated by Enterprise, to realize its innovative concepts.

POAH will partner with The Center for Trauma Informed Innovation at Truman Medical Centers in Kansas City and its current partner the Community Services League in Independence, to work with residents and staff to explore trauma-informed innovations in resident services. The project will look at property management practices and physical design to create a more equitable model for affordable housing that reduces evictions, improves resident and staff retention; promotes healthy, physical design; and contributes to individual and community resiliency.

Why this work is needed:

Individual and community trauma has been shown to have a lasting impact on the body and the brain, exacerbating pre-existing health conditions disproportionately impacting communities of color, and targeting the most vulnerable members of our society – including POAH’s residents. As affordable housing providers have been working to address the growing housing crisis, organizations like POAH have been challenged by decades-old compliance regulations and restrictions that deter them from helping residents address underlying trauma issues that can result in resident evictions, health problems and financial and family instability to name a few.

“We believe that applying trauma-informed care principles and practices to affordable housing is an idea whose time has come,” said Aaron Gornstein, President and CEO of POAH. “The COVID-19 pandemic and the growing need to address racial injustices make this even more urgent today.”

“Housing affordability is directly tied to racial equity and both are urgent issues fundamentally impacting every community in our country. That is what makes the Breakthrough Challenge so

important right now,” said Priscilla Almodovar, chief executive officer at Enterprise Community Partners.

“We are delighted to have joined Enterprise Community Partners to engage creative innovators with know-how, technical skill, and imagination, who are now awarded catalytic funding to transform their housing affordability ideas into real solutions on the ground,” said Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy with the Wells Fargo Foundation.

The Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge is part of Wells Fargo’s \$1 billion commitment to support housing affordability solutions nationwide by 2025. Entrants were asked to specifically demonstrate how their breakthrough ideas addressed racial equity and environmental considerations. The applications varied widely, demonstrating a commitment to reframing approaches to single-family and multifamily housing challenges and addressing the wide-ranging needs of homeowners, renters, children, youth, families and seniors in communities across the United States.

For more information on the competition, as well as the finalists and their winning proposals, visit [the Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge](https://www.poah.org/housing-affordability-breakthrough-challenge) website.

POAH is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, create and sustain affordable, healthy homes that support economic security, racial equity and access to opportunity for all. POAH owns and operates nearly 12,000 affordable rental homes in 11 states and the District of Columbia. www.poah.org

Hawthorne Apartments in Independence

