

# 2022 ARIZONA HOUSING FORUM

## BRIAN MICKELSEN HOUSING HERO AWARD

### Outstanding Affordable Housing Initiative

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS SOLUNA  
GORMAN & COMPANY  
PHOENIX HOUSING DEPARTMENT

#### Challenge:

In July 2018, the City of Phoenix Housing Department was awarded a \$30 million CNI Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the first-ever CNI Grant awarded to a community in Arizona, to transform the EEC bounded by the I-10 Freeway on the north and east, 16th Street on the west, and the Union Pacific Railroad on the south, an area that included the State's largest concentration of public housing, into a vibrant mixed-income neighborhood. Leveraging over \$200 million of additional funding to provide more than 1,000 families with new, high-quality, affordable and market rate housing, along with significant neighborhood improvements, the City of Phoenix is transforming the EEC as well as the lives of residents who call this neighborhood home. To assist with a project of this magnitude, the City of Phoenix competitively selected Gorman & Company to serve as the Housing Implementation Entity for this grant.

Soluna represents an excellent example of a mixed-income project, with 80 percent of the units being affordable, while 20 percent are available at market rate, not only providing modern amenities to residents but offering a sense of place with added resources to promote community including public art such as the Soluna Art Plaza and two large murals depicting the past and future of the EEC by renowned artist, Hugo Medina. Conveniently located approximately one mile east of downtown Phoenix, and sandwiched between Edison School and Edison Park, Soluna is also situated close to employment hubs, recreational, healthcare and educational facilities, and arts and cultural sites.



#### Solution:

HUD's CNI is focused on three core goals: Housing, People, Neighborhood, all of which are addressed in the EEC One Vision Plan, a community-driven vision developed in partnership with residents, community stakeholders, partner agencies and City departments, and a road map for how to make that vision a reality. Soluna addresses all three key elements described below.

**Housing:** Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

**People:** Improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to employment and income, health, and children's education.

**Neighborhood:** Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestments in distressed neighborhoods to offer amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, which are important to families' choices about their community.

In addition to the newly developed Soluna Apartments that replaces obsolete public housing units as part of the CNI revitalization efforts, community transformative improvements have also been implemented and/or are being planned via resident and stakeholder input.



#### Result:

Gorman & Company, in partnership with the Phoenix Housing Department Corporation (PHDC), developed Soluna Apartments, a 177-unit affordable and market-rate Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) project in Phoenix, Arizona. Soluna, located at 950 N 19th St., provides quality living at an affordable cost, offers a new mixed-income housing option, reshapes and revitalizes the EEC neighborhood, and encourages a new sense of pride within the community. The redevelopment has capitalized on transit-oriented development opportunities, deconcentrating poverty, and ensuring long-term housing affordability in this centrally located community of Phoenix.

Community amenities feature multi-purpose spaces available for on-site events and programs, as well as a teen room, fitness center, playgrounds, and a computer lab. Plus an art plaza that includes handmade artwork from children who live at Soluna.

Soluna represents the first mixed-income housing development project as part of the CNI EEC revitalization efforts. Soluna I was financed using 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) while Soluna II utilized 4% LIHTC.

