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## **CMHA Receives Two National Excellence Awards for Innovative Programs**

**CLEVELAND, OH (October 28, 2011)** — Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CHMA) has been chosen as a winner of two prestigious National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) Awards of Excellence for its Ohio City Urban Farm Initiative and establishing an Automated Income Verification Process. CHMA was the only entity to receive two awards.

“CHMA is leading the way in innovation and initiative in the affordable housing industry,” said NAHRO President Akinola Popoola. “Cities like Cleveland are suffering from urban blight due to the alarming rate of dilapidated, empty lots in the city, the Ohio City Farm has become symbolic of the many imaginative ways a shrinking city can reinvent itself when heavy industry leaves. In creating the Automated Income Verification Process the authority has been able to simplify an otherwise complicated and time-consuming procedure, but more importantly it has helped serve and house more families in their community.”

By utilizing community partnerships, CMHA converted a six acre abandoned lot behind a 500-unit public housing complex, into an urban farm and employed refugees, public housing residents, and low-income members of the community to tend to the farm. The Ohio City Farm is the largest contiguous urban farm land in the United States created by repurposing “unusable” land into a viable and productive farm overlooking the city.

“CMHA is proud to receive this recognition from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials,” said Jeffery K. Patterson, Acting CEO of CMHA. “Clearly, these awards are the sum of a lot of hard work by housing Authority staff, strong partnerships and collaborations all focused on enriching the lives of our residents in the community.”

The Automated Income Verification Process was established in collaboration with the Cuyahoga County Employment and Family Services (EFS) Department, and enabled the electronic transfer of income verification requests to EFS in a period of 24 to 48 hours rather than the manual turnaround time of up to ten business days. Over 9,000 applicants and/or residents have already been impacted by the process in roughly six months since the program’s inception.

The Awards of Excellence are nominated from among the Award of Merit winners each year, these Awards are chosen by national juries and presented at the annual National Conference and Exhibition. They represent the very best in innovative programs in assisted housing and community development.

#### About NAHRO

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, established in 1933, is a membership organization of over 23,000 housing and community development agencies and professionals throughout the United States whose mission is to create affordable housing and safe, viable communities that enhance the quality of life for all Americans, especially those of low- and moderate-income. NAHRO’s membership administers more than 3 million housing units for 7.6 million people.

#### About CHMA

Founded in 1933, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority is the oldest public housing authority in the country. It is an independent political subdivision of the State of Ohio, created under sections 3735.27 and 3735.50 of the Ohio Revised Code. It serves Cuyahoga County excluding Chagrin Falls Township, through two federally assisted housing programs: Low-Income Public Housing, which serves 16,000 residents, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which provides rental assistance to 14,000 households.

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