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Debbie-Ann Anderson Receives APHSA Excellence Award for Local Member at National Human Services Summit

Philadelphia, PA - The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) recognized Debbie-Ann Anderson, Director of the Union County (NJ) Department of Human Services, with the 2025 APHSA Excellence Award for a Local Member. The award was presented at the [APHSA National Human Services Summit 2025](#).

The APHSA Excellence Award for a Local Member honors local leaders who demonstrate innovation and a deep commitment to advancing social and economic mobility. Anderson exemplifies these values through her transformative leadership in Union County.

“Debbie-Ann is a true powerhouse in human services,” said Kelly Garcia, Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. “She’s dedicated over two decades to strengthening communities and improving the lives of children and families.”

Since 2017, Anderson has led Union County’s largest agency with a focus on innovation and community empowerment. Her leadership shifted the county’s approach from crisis response to proactive strategies that address root causes of poverty and instability. The Union County Food Security Summit, a standout initiative in 2024, brought together community stakeholders to address hunger and build solutions for food security.

“Debbie-Ann is a leader in systems change at the local level,” said Reggie Bicha, President and CEO of APHSA. “Her innovative approaches to ending intergenerational poverty and modernizing service delivery make her a standout among her peers.”

Union County Manager Ed Oatman also praised Anderson’s leadership and her award win, saying “Director Debbie-Ann Anderson’s recognition by APHSA is a proud moment for Union County and a testament to her visionary leadership.” Oatman continued, “She brings heart, purpose, and relentless dedication to everything she does—always focused on the people behind the work. This honor is well-deserved, and we’re incredibly proud to have her leading meaningful change in our community.”

Beyond her role in Union County, Anderson serves on APHSA’s Leadership Council and was recently elected Chair of the National Association of County Human Services Administrators.

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About APHSA: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) supports leaders from state, county, and city human services agencies to advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities nationwide. As a bipartisan membership association, they work with their members to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.