

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
202-866-0535, jgaron@aphsa.org

APHSA Announces Recipient of 2024 Excellence Award for Outstanding Local Member

Michael A. Becketts recognized for his tremendous impact at APHSA National Human Services Summit

ARLINGTON, VA – The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) has announced that Michael A. Becketts, Director of the Department of Family Services for Fairfax County, Virginia, is this year’s recipient of the APHSA Excellence Award for Outstanding Local Member. The award was presented during the 2024 APHSA National Human Services Summit, in recognition of Dr. Becketts’ leadership and impactful work across human services.

Kate Garvey, Director of the Department of Community and Human Services, says of Dr. Becketts, “Michael has long demonstrated his tremendous commitment to advancing the well-being of families and communities across the country. He is both a visionary and an implementer, as he makes amazing things happen. This award is a well-deserved acknowledgement of his wonderful work.”

For over two decades, spanning child welfare to education, every milestone in Michael A. Becketts’ career reflects his commitment to enhancing the health and safety of the communities he serves. This is best represented by his ability to engage with community residents, rebuild trust, and truly value the voices and ideas of those served. Michael A. Becketts’ collaborative spirit has redefined how urban social services systems engage with and serve families.

The APHSA Excellence Award for Outstanding Local Member is awarded to a local-level leader who has made significant contributions to moving human services upstream, advancing social and economic mobility, and strengthening the human services sector. Dr. Becketts’ recognition as a leader among leaders in local human services agencies truly embodies the spirit of this award.

The APHSA National Human Services Summit 2024 took place June 9-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

###

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 with a lens for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
202-866-0535, jgaron@aphsa.org

APHSA Announces Recipient of 2024 Excellence Award for Outstanding State Member
Michael Leach recognized for outstanding leadership at APHSA National Human Services Summit

ARLINGTON, VA – The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is proud to announce that Michael Leach, State Director for the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), was awarded the prestigious APHSA Excellence Award for Outstanding State Member. The award was presented at the 2024 APHSA National Human Services Summit in recognition of Mr. Leach’s unwavering commitment to human services and his innovative leadership during challenging times.

“Michael has been an exceptional leader while with the South Carolina Department of Social Services [DSS],” says Kelly Garcia, the Director of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and Chair of the APHSA Leadership Council. “His true character shined through as he led the agency through the unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic.”

Michael Leach’s career started in Tennessee where he worked to improve the quality and effectiveness of services that supported children at risk for adverse outcomes. In 2019, he began leading a staff of more than 4,400 professionals at South Carolina’s DDS, operationalizing a prevention mindset to the way the agency supports healthy and thriving families.

Director Garcia adds that, “Michael’s forward-thinking approach and diverse background have equipped him to navigate complex systems and develop long-term solutions that will have positive outcomes for generations to come.”

The APHSA Excellence Award for Outstanding State Member honors those who make significant contributions to APHSA and the human services sector through their dedication to moving human services upstream, advancing social and economic mobility, and strengthening the sector. Michael Leach’s recognition reflects his meaningful contributions and the lasting impact he has made on service delivery.

The APHSA National Human Services Summit 2024 took place June 9-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

###

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 with a lens for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
202-866-0535, jgaron@aphsa.org

APHSA Announces Recipient of 2024 Future of Human Services Award

The New England States Whole Family Approach to Jobs Initiative recognized at the APHSA National Human Services Summit

ARLINGTON, VA – The New England States Whole Family Approach to Jobs Initiative received the Future of Human Services Award at the annual American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) National Human Services Summit. The award recognizes their dedicated work to reduce benefits cliffs—the sudden loss of public benefits some face if they earn slightly more income which can discourage work and hinder economic mobility.

Elaine Zimmerman, the Region I Administrator for the Administration of Children & Families (ACF), elaborated on their collaborative work stating, “The six New England states have led the way to decrease the cliff effect and its impact on family economic mobility. They worked on culture change, budget, policy and practice, and shared solutions. This work opened other state and national efforts to do the same.”

A collaborative effort between six Region I states—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—the Whole Family Approach to Jobs Initiative implemented strategies to increase the amount of time individuals could receive benefits, and used a suite of tools to model the interaction of public benefits, tax credits, and expenses with career advancement.

Speaking on the potential effect of this work, Bethany Hamm, Deputy Commissioner for Maine’s Department of Health and Human Services, says, “Educating lawmakers and other key players about our whole family approach to jobs is critical to passing legislation that will ultimately level out the benefits cliffs so families can thrive and be less dependent on public assistance programs in the future.”

The Summit provides a platform for knowledge-building on emerging national policy issues that affect the human services sector, while also recognizing the achievements of APHSA members and partners. The Future of Human Services Award is for those who provide a guiding light to a human services system that is human-centered and community-driven. The New England States Whole Family Approach to Jobs Initiative embodies these principles and APHSA is honored to recognize the transformative impact of their ongoing efforts.

The APHSA National Human Services Summit 2024 took place June 9-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

###

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 with a lens for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
202-866-0535, jgaron@aphsa.org

APHSA Announces Recipient of 2024 Research and Evaluation Innovation Award
Chapin Hall's groundbreaking research recognized at APHSA National Human Services Summit

ARLINGTON, VA – Chapin Hall at The University of Chicago was recognized at the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) National Human Services Summit with the Research and Evaluation Innovation Award. Claire Anderson accepted the award on behalf of Chapin Hall, underscoring the institution's impact in advancing the human services sector.

Aprille Flint-Gerner, Child Welfare Division Director at the Oregon Department of Human Services, shared, "Chapin Hall's steadfast dedication to improving outcomes for all children and families is evidenced by their distinguished research and innovative evaluation within human services. With a focus on prevention, family support, and preservation, Chapin Hall plays a pivotal role in shaping programs across the broader system."

Chapin Hall was recognized for its groundbreaking work on the importance of economic and concrete supports for families as a means to promote family preservation and prevent child welfare involvement. In placing careful research behind this core idea and producing a suite of knowledge and tools in collaboration with community-based organizations, Chapin Hall has been a catalyst for changing the national conversation about how to support the well-being of families.

Flint-Gerner added, "Chapin Hall's commitment to progress in Oregon, and nationwide, has been strongly demonstrated and is greatly valued. With an unwavering dedication to continuous quality improvement, they help to light pathways toward enhancing the well-being of children and families and set a standard of excellence for the entire industry."

The APHSA Research and Evaluation Innovation Award is a testament to Chapin Hall's exemplary approach to translating research into practice and their significant influence on child welfare reform.

The APHSA National Human Services Summit 2024 took place June 9-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

###

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 with a lens for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 11, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
202-866-0535, jgaron@aphsa.org

APHSA Announces Recipient of 2024 Jerry W. Friedman Human Services Impact Award
Gerald Huber recognized for a lifetime of services at APHSA National Human Services Summit

ARLINGTON, VA – Gerald Huber, Director of Solano County Health and Social Services in California, received the esteemed Jerry W. Friedman Human Services Impact Award at the annual American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) National Human Services Summit 2024. The Summit provides a platform for knowledge-building on emerging national policy issues that affect the human services sector, while also providing the opportunity to recognize the achievements of APHSA members and partners.

“Gerald Huber is truly deserving of this honor, stated Rhonda Smith, Administrator, Solano County Child Welfare Services. As a dedicated leader, he is unwaveringly committed to enhancing human services, all while ensuring that every member of our team is valued and heard. Mr. Huber is the perfect role model for leaders in our sector—one we should all strive to emulate.”

Mr. Huber’s 30-year career has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to public service, and his innovative leadership has significantly enhanced the quality of human services in Solano County and beyond. In addition, Mr. Huber’s efforts have been instrumental in fostering strong state and county relationships in Wisconsin and Minnesota, while his work has led to transformative reforms across various states including Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, and California. He has also been instrumental in crafting welfare reform programs that have shaped national policy.

The Jerry W. Friedman Human Services Impact Award honors individuals who embody Friedman’s vision of enabling all people to live to their full potential along with his commitment to stronger, healthier families and communities. Gerald Huber’s extensive work in human services, serving not only as a leader but also as a mentor and coach, epitomizes the spirit of this award and makes him an exemplary recipient.

The APHSA National Human Services Summit 2024 took place June 9-12 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

###

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 with a lens for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.