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Director Laura Green Zeilinger Honored with Outstanding Local Leader Award

DC Department of Human Services Director Recognized by the American Public Human Services Association for Her Commitment to District Residents

(WASHINGTON, DC) – Today, the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) announced that Director Laura Green Zeilinger was honored by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) with their Outstanding Local Leader Award. The award was presented to Director Zeilinger during the 2023 APHSA Member Awards ceremony held on May 23, 2023.

"Coming into office, I knew that we needed a bold and transformational vision at the Department of Human Services. That's the type of leadership Director Zeilinger has brought to this work since January 2015," said Mayor Muriel Bowser. "She has worked diligently to prioritize the dignity and needs of our most vulnerable residents and to lead a team at DHS that brings expertise and passion to this work every day. In doing so, Director Zeilinger has helped our community understand and believe that when you set big goals and you put in the work and get the right resources in place, even our most vexing challenges are solvable."

The outstanding local and state member awards recognize an individual or agency for outstanding contributions and commitment to building thriving communities by advancing the mission of APHSA.

Since 2015, Director Zeilinger has led a team of 1,500 dedicated employees to empower every District resident to reach their full potential by providing meaningful connections to work opportunities, economic assistance, and supportive services.

Her focus on implementing solutions to end homelessness, including the launch of the District's Homeless Prevention Program, introducing smaller, neighborhood-based and service-enriched emergency shelter programs, and other homeless service reforms, have led to a 78% decrease in family homelessness between 2016 and 2021 and effectively ending chronic family homelessness in the District.

Director Zeilinger is applying lessons learned from system enhancements for families to advance the Continuum of Care for individuals experiencing homelessness by making investments in outreach, prevention and diversion services, shelter renovations and supportive services, while maintaining investments in the housing assistance people need to exit homelessness.

Working with stakeholders and the Council of the District of Columbia, Director Zeilinger led the District to becoming one of the leading cities in the Nation to end the arbitrary Federal 60-month time limit for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program. This significant change for DC TANF participants is supporting families and helping them meet their employment and education goals.

Director Zeilinger also led DHS through an unprecedented public health emergency and quickly adapted to evolving circumstances and needs of District residents.

APHSA is the preeminent national organization which 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, APHSA works to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience with a lens for equity and belonging. For more information about the American Public Human Services Association, [click here](#).

For more information about the DC Department of Human Services, [click here](#).

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