

**News Release**  
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## Local Housing Advocates Receive Partnership Awards

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – Three Michigan communities were recognized with Partnership Awards at the 2017 Northwest Michigan Housing Summit in Traverse City. Housing advocates from Leelanau County, Benzie County, and the City of Charlevoix all received Community Cornerstone Awards from the Northwest Michigan Housing Solutions Network.

The Housing Cornerstone Partnership Award recognizes collaborative, proactive action to address complex, critical housing issues. Communities receiving the award are working in partnership with multiple sectors to lead new initiatives and explore creative solutions. Recipients of the Partnership Award were:

- Leelanau REACH, a Leelanau County-based housing nonprofit, in recognition of its efforts to enhance education, collaboration, and partnerships to address Leelanau County housing needs. REACH's efforts to build housing and address housing barriers have accounted for the fact that housing solutions won't come just from government, the market, or advocates alone. Instead, REACH has embodied the idea that all parts of the community must play a role in solutions to housing shortages. The organization has brought representatives together from across sectors to explore solutions, build partnerships, and create models for housing that can be replicated in other communities.
- The City of Charlevoix, Charlevoix Main Street, Charlevoix Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce for promoting City-wide dialogue and action on workforce housing shortages and solutions. Local business interests have advocated for zoning solutions to workforce housing shortages, leading to initiatives including zoning changes that allow homeowners to rent out single rooms for workers, and a Home Share website hosted by Charlevoix Main Street that provides an avenue for renters and homeowners to connect.
- Advocates for Benzie County and the City of Frankfort, for their efforts to convene schools, government, business, and development interests around the issues of workforce development, housing production, and workforce housing development. These partners have worked together to identify development sites and opportunities to attract new business and jobs, and for students to learn construction trades while building homes at costs that are affordable to the workforce. Their advocacy efforts, meanwhile, have made housing solutions an important priority County-wide, and have helped build partnerships and engagement across multiple sectors in the community.

The awards were presented at the Housing Summit, an annual event coordinated by Networks Northwest and the Northwest Michigan Housing Solutions Network to provide opportunities to network, learn, and build solutions for housing choices in Northwest Michigan. About 200 people, representing banks, private sector real estate and development, housing and health organizations, local governments, and statewide organizations attended the event to learn about issues including the costs of development, financing, development readiness, statewide policy needs, and demographic trends impacting the housing market. Speakers included Bob Filka from the Home Builders Association of Michigan; Laurie Volk from Zimmerman Volk Associates, a market research firm; Patrick Moran from the United Way of Ottawa and Allegan Counties; Luke Forrest from the Michigan Municipal League; Doug Luciani from Traverse CONNECT; Tom Edmiston from Cinnaire; Lily Fossel from New Development Corp; and more.

For more information on the Housing Summit, including presentations and materials, please visit [www.nwm.org/housingsummit](http://www.nwm.org/housingsummit).

The **Housing Solutions Network** seeks to aid in development of a diverse mix of regional housing choices with affordable options that fit in with the unique character of the countryside, neighborhoods, villages, and cities of our region.

We do this by:

- Educating
- Collaborating
- Developing resources

Our informal network group is made up of representatives from nonprofit housing organizations, funders, lending institutions, real estate, local government, and other housing stakeholders from Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. We work collaboratively to raise and leverage funding, provide educational resources, and build awareness of housing issues.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our web site, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org)

Networks Northwest's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.