



## For Immediate Release

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# Oakland Receives National Award for Neighborhood Law Corps Program

(Oakland, CA) Today, the National League of Cities (NLC) announced Oakland, CA as one of nine cities in the United States to be selected to receive the *2006 Awards for Municipal Excellence* at the National League of Cities' Congress of Cities in Reno, Nevada on December 8th. Oakland is one of three cities in the country to be the *Gold Winner*. Gold and Silver status is awarded in three population categories.

Inspired by the Peace Corps and Legal Aid, the Neighborhood Law Corps takes an innovative approach to community legal work. Newly minted lawyers combat blight, public nuisances and substandard housing conditions at the direction of Oakland residents and merchants. Since the program's inception, Law Corps attorneys have handled 157 matters, including 48 actions to abate drug nuisances, 20 cases involving building code violations, 23 cases against liquor stores and 66 cases related to alcohol abatement, weapons and other health and safety issues.

"It's a profound honor to be recognized for such a prestigious award," said Neighborhood Law Corps founder and Oakland City Attorney John Russo. "Five years ago the Law Corps was just a dream. Today we're being acknowledged for using the law in innovative and creative ways to correct chronic problems the community thought could never be fixed."

Other winning cities include Erlanger - Kentucky, Asheville - North Carolina, Chicago - Illinois, Bell Gardens - California, Portsmouth - Virginia, Lawton - Oklahoma, Tempe - Arizona and Indianapolis - Indiana. These cities were selected for the successful implementation of their projects, and the possible replication of their projects in other cities. Innovation, productive partnerships and the effective use of resources are the hallmarks of the programs. Each city received a cash award, which will be donated to the community non-profit organization of their choice.

"These winners prove that our cities are the leading innovators of our time, creating programs and services that can be replicated all across America," said NLC President James C. Hunt, councilman from Clarksburg, West Virginia. "The National League of Cities takes pride in showcasing the best and the brightest that cities and towns have to offer."

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The Awards for Municipal Excellence recognize cities that improve the quality of life in their communities. The National League of Cities has partnered with CH2M Hill, a construction, engineering and consulting firm, since the inception of the awards program in 1989. The Awards for Municipal Excellence identify and showcase outstanding city and town programs that improve the quality of life in America's communities.

*The National League of Cities is the largest national organization for American cities and towns. NLC serves as a resource and advocate for 18,000 cities, towns and villages of all sizes, which collectively serve 225 million people. Visit [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).*

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