



News Release

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HACA and the City of Austin Help Low-Income Students Plug into Learning

Scholarship recipients receive de-asseted City computers as part of a digital inclusion pilot

The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) and its nonprofit subsidiary Austin Pathways today (July 7) awarded 42 renewable scholarships totaling \$80,000 to residents of its public housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs at its 17th Annual Austin Pathways HACA Scholarship Ceremony. HACA has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships since 2001.

“We are proud to award scholarships to these 42 deserving individuals so that they may continue their education and pursue rewarding opportunities for themselves and their families,” said HACA President and CEO Michael Gerber.

City of Austin Chief Information Officer Stephen Elkins announced that all HACA scholars would be loaned a de-asseted computer. The pilot loaner program is funded in part by The Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPS). The City of Austin is loaning de-asseted computers to local nonprofits, including HACA, to increase digital inclusion in underserved communities. Currently, City computers past their service life go to a recycling center.

“The PC Community Loan Pilot Program helps the neediest in Austin with connectivity, access and opportunity, in accordance with the City’s Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan,” said Elkins, who oversees the City’s Communications & Technology Management Department. “With the PC Community Loan Pilot Program, the City is repurposing those computers for the purposes of bridging the digital divide, enhancing workforce development, and promoting educational opportunity.”

Scholarship recipients range from newly graduated high school students to returning adult students and those attending college for the first time. Santa Rita resident Ndabitezimana “Sophie” Asifiwe represents nearly half of the awardees. She is the first generation in her family to attend college. Asifiwe will start at the Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas in the fall, and aspires to become a nurse.

“Education is the foundation for a successful future,” said HACA Board Chairman Carl Richie Jr. “Being a former public housing resident myself, I know how a good education can open the right doors. I am proud of these 42 students who will use these scholarships to pursue careers in fields such as healthcare, engineering and science.”

Austin Pathways oversees and manages an endowment for HACA resident scholarships that originated with seed funding from HACA's nonprofit, revenue generating subsidiaries -- Southwest Housing Compliance Corporation and Austin Affordable Housing Corporation. Annual fundraising

through donations and grants allows Austin Pathways to maintain this endowment and continue to provide resident scholarships.

About Austin Pathways: Austin Pathways is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes the education and general welfare of low-income Austinites who live in the 18 public housing communities owned and operated by HACA and those who participate in its Housing Choice Voucher program. Austin Pathways supports scholarships, youth academic enrichment, workforce development, and health and wellness initiatives. For more information, visit austinpathways.org.

About HACA: The Housing Authority of the City of Austin is a public agency whose mission is to cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self reliance, growth and optimism. For more information, visit www.hacanet.org, or find us on Twitter [@hacanet](https://twitter.com/hacanet).

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