



Robin Hughes Elected as Board Chair at HPN's 44th National Meeting in Boston



Robin Hughes, CEO of Abode Communities in Los Angeles

Robin Hughes, President & CEO of Abode Communities in Los Angeles, was elected board chair of the Housing Partnership Network (HPN) at its national members' meeting in Boston in early June. HPN is an award-winning business collaborative of the nation's leading affordable housing and community development nonprofits and a top-rated CDFI.

Hughes has been actively involved in affordable housing and community development for over 30 years. As leader of Abode Communities, she has developed more than 50 residential and mixed-use communities; created new affordable homes for over 8,000 California residents; and provided a social safety net to some 5,000 people through Beyond Homes resident services program. Founded in 1968, Abode Communities is the longest-established nonprofit affordable housing provider in Southern California and since that time, has become the leading provider of LEED® for Homes Platinum units in the State of California.

Hughes succeeds Larry Swanson, Executive Director of ACTION Housing in Pittsburg, who served as chair of HPN for the last six years. Swanson provided strong leadership to the board and HPN through a period of dynamic growth and innovation where HPN deepened its member engagement, policy advocacy and social enterprise development.

The Boston meeting, which took place at the historic Parker House Hotel, highlighted the tremendous progress achieved since more than 125 nonprofit and industry leaders first met more than 25 years ago in the same hotel to launch the network. Members and staff recounted the inspirational [social enterprise story](#) of how these leaders built HPN - motivated in part by founder Bob Whittlesey's experience with the British nonprofit housing sector. The mutual learning and innovation that has resulted from HPN's ten year collaboration with the top nonprofits in the UK, Canada and Australia was recently featured in [congressional testimony](#) that HPN's CEO Tom Bledsoe delivered to the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance of the House Financial Services Committee on the [lessons learned](#) from HPN's International Housing Partnership.



Tom Bledsoe, HPN CEO, testifying to Congress on policy lessons from the US & UK

More than 250 senior executives of the member organizations, the largest leadership convening yet, engaged in spirited and frank discussion about key challenges and opportunities confronting our communities and residents.

Leaders explored and planned strategies to build partnerships - particularly with the health care industry and impact investors - to deepen and further scale our impact.

Two keynote speakers - Dr. Megan Sandel of the BU School of Medicine and the Children's HealthWatch, and Matt Desmond, Harvard Sociology Professor and author of the bestselling book *Evicted* - spoke to the HPN leadership and then engaged in round table discussions with practitioners. Dr. Sandel made a compelling case for affordable housing as a proven vaccine to prevent poor health, education, and economic outcomes and HPN's delivery system as a pharmacy to deliver an effective dose in communities across the country.

Describing his experiences and research in Milwaukee, Matt Desmond outlined the negative impact that housing instability and eviction has on children's health and education, as well as its role in accelerating poverty. He urged HPN to think boldly about developing high impact solutions to address this fundamental challenge facing our nation.

Members were moved by the forceful and affirming articulation of the importance of our work and the great strides and accomplishments we have made as a collaborative network. Leaders left Boston with an even deeper commitment to working together with key allies such as Sandel and Desmond to create inclusive, stable and healthy communities that foster opportunity and hope for millions of Americans who are struggling to make a better life for themselves and their children.

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