

## **City of Phoenix: Disabled and Senior Housing**

**Issue Area:** Housing

**Contact:** Richard Beardsley  
Disabled and Senior  
Housing Director  
City of Phoenix  
Phoenix, AZ  
(602) 262-6794



**Date Published:** June 2004

### **Summary:**

“Well... They age in place,” was Richard Beardsley’s response when asked about the duration of senior citizens’ habitation at Phoenix senior housing communities. The seniors who live in the senior and disabled housing in Phoenix hardly ever decide to move out. The City’s program is an excellent affordable housing option for seniors to age in place. Furthermore, it is a perfect example of a federally assisted project that will become more important as Phoenix’s population ages. In 2003 one of Phoenix’s older adult housing communities, La Cascada II, was distinguished as a gold winner for affordable senior apartments.

The Phoenix Disabled and Senior Housing Department was started in 1978 in order to supply affordable housing for seniors and disabled persons. Phoenix wanted to ensure that all it’s citizens would have a warm and hospitable place to live throughout their entire life. Their mission is dedicated to helping the local seniors continue living an active and fulfilling life throughout their retirement years. The department and housing construction was initially entirely federally funded, but now their cash inflows come from rent payments, federal subsidies, and rental assistance. The program is run entirely by the Phoenix City government and is not partnered with any private company. Throughout the 26 year history of supplying homes to disabled and elderly, the department has created and sustained six complexes with over 625 units designed for seniors and disabled people.

The apartments feature such luxury necessities as emergency light systems, emergency call alarms, and air conditioning. All of the buildings in the program feature security entry systems, whirl pools, community rooms, gardening facilities, trips to the local grocery store, and game rooms. In addition some buildings feature specially designed wheelchair accessible rooms, which feature handicapped accessible bathrooms and a lowered kitchen counters. Phoenix’s efforts to design elder friendly housing



*La Cascada II, Senior Apartments*

were rewarded by the Seniors Housing Council of the National Association of Home Builders in 2003. La Cascada II, a 36-unit apartment community, received the gold award for “Affordable Senior Apartments” in the 2003 Best of Seniors Housing Design Awards. They boast a staff and environment that improves the quality of life for everyone living in their elder community. All of Phoenix’s housing is strategically planned near important stores and public institutions: bus routes, shopping centers, grocery stores, senior centers, parks, hospitals and pharmacies.

This program is successful because it addresses all the pertinent issues related to senior housing: transportation, recreational opportunities, safety and health services, and housing that enables aging in place. Following up on Richard Beardsley’s aging in place quotation, he said the apartments are usually filled and the communities that feature senior only housing are always filled. This program proves its value as an aging in place best practice because it is a perfect example of a city’s initiative to start a non-privately funded senior housing program that has resulted in hundreds of apartments strategically placed to allow for seniors to age in place actively and happily.

#### **Related Resources:**

“Affordable Housing: La Cascada II.” City of Phoenix: Housing Department.  
<<http://phoenix.gov/HOUSING/lc2.html>>.

“Disabled and Senior Housing.” City of Phoenix.  
<<http://phoenix.gov/CITZASST/senhouse.html>>.