

NCSHA 2016 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Visit ncsha.org/awards to view the Annual Awards Call for Entries.

Instructions: Type entry information into the form and save it as a PDF. Do not write on or scan the form. If you have any questions contact awards@ncsha.org or 202-624-7710.

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name:

AHFC Team Intranet

HFA:

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Submission Contact:

(Must be HFA Staff Member)

Stacy Schubert

Email:

sschubert@ahfc.us

Please provide a 15-word (maximum) description of your nomination to appear on the NCSHA website.

AHFC's intranet is redesigned as an interactive tool for employee engagement through collaboration and storytelling.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page:

HFA:

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Entry Name:

AHFC Team Intranet

Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
<input type="radio"/> Annual Report	<input type="radio"/> Empowering New Buyers	<input type="radio"/> Federal Advocacy	<input type="radio"/> Financial
<input type="radio"/> Creative Media	<input type="radio"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="radio"/> State Advocacy	<input type="radio"/> Human Resources
<input type="radio"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters	<input type="radio"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation		<input type="radio"/> Operations
			<input checked="" type="radio"/> Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="radio"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="radio"/> Combating Homelessness	<input type="radio"/> Special Achievement	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> Multifamily Management	<input type="radio"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs		<input type="radio"/> No
<input type="radio"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation			

Project Description

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) works diligently to provide access to safe, quality, affordable housing for a state that spans 663,000 squares miles. That means that AHFC's 300 employees are working on diverse issues, in diverse economic and geographic areas, some of which are not even accessible by road (you'd have to take an airplane or a boat to get to these remote communities).

Camaraderie that comes naturally when employees gather around the water cooler isn't a cost-effective option for AHFC. Their employees need an internal communications platform that could offer the latest information and an ability to easily connect with others around the state. While AHFC already had an intranet, it had evolved into a warehouse of information instead of a valuable, collaborative tool. AHFC set a goal to redesign, develop and add enhancements to its intranet.

AHFC established a clear vision: *"...the corporate intranet will offer the latest information about strategic direction, up-to-date news, better search functionality, improved content organization, and enhancements to further develop more timely and improved communications, collaboration and access to corporate information. The intent is to improve internal communications leading to increased productivity and a better understanding of corporate goals and programs."*

Following project management best practices for technology roll outs, a team of AHFC stakeholders moved through the stages of research, analysis and planning, communications and execution, and evaluation.

Research

AHFC kicked off the project with applied research, gathering best practices, successful intranet examples and case studies from other housing authorities. Qualitative information was gathered from the executive team through focus groups. Both quantitative and qualitative feedback was gathered from employees through a survey.

Research revealed what the team expected: employees were using the intranet for easy access to HR forms but the site was far from inspiring and engaging. Employees longed for improved ease of use. They wanted robust search functionality, an intuitive information architecture, quick access to a staff directory and commonly used applications, and an easy-to-use CMS for those who needed to add content but lacked a technical background. Applied research of best practices and case studies showed that expectations could be merged into a single, robust communications tool.

Analysis and Planning

Once research was complete, the Government Relations & Public Affairs team (GRPA) combined objectives, design guidelines, identification of enablers and inhibitors, requirements (organized by must haves and like to haves), and potential platforms with associated budgets into a strategic document.

With a clear strategy and research, some of the most outstanding features included a flat, modern, responsive design driven by visual elements; an interactive messaging feed that allows users to post, like and reply to comments and photos; a place to feature human interest stories that highlight employees from across the state; and daily, attention-grabbing news updates on the homepage.

Communication and Execution

To implement its vision, AHFC worked with Gere Donovan to build a prototype of the design and functionality outlined in the strategic document. Gere Donovan worked with the AHFC team to create the prototype on a secure, internal server and tie the intranet into their existing Microsoft Outlook directory so users would automatically be signed in with their existing AHFC profile (including name, email and photograph).

The finished prototype was turned over to AHFC, and the webmaster followed the content migration plan, populating internal pages and adding featured content to the front pages from a content bank. After content migration was complete, the new intranet was launched.

AHFC presented an overview of the internal website, offering a video presentation to those outside of the Anchorage market. They also distributed custom-created training documents, “How to Use the Intranet” and “What’s New About the Intranet” to all employees, and they scheduled post-launch trainings for each AHFC department. Intranet usage training will be part of new employee onboarding, and subsequent trainings will be available to administrators and users.

Evaluation

Once the site was launched, GRPA distributed a survey to gather post-launch qualitative and quantitative data and find out what was working well and what could be improved. The project was launched within budget, and successfully accomplished the vision for the project.

Why the AHFC intranet is meritorious and meets NCSHA award judging criteria

Innovative

Based on best practices gathered during the research phase, AHFC determined that the new intranet needed to be a collaborative tool with a modern aesthetic. They implemented the following features:

- Modern, flat design featuring the AHFC brand.
- Tiled content layout, promoting readership of corporate information and employee stories.
- A twitter-like feed where employees can post information and “like” or respond to posts.
- Rich media content (photos and videos) to provide diverse information for employees to consume.
- A process for employees to easily submit personal feature stories, in order to build relationships across an organization that spans hundreds of thousands of miles.

The site was built on a robust content management system (the same as the public-facing website) that allows for multiple levels of user administration, a content version log (so you can see who posted what when), and searchable PDFs.

Replicable

AHFC used a standard project management schedule and kept detailed documentation throughout each step of the process. The steps used by AHFC to build the new intranet — research, analysis and planning, communication and execution, and evaluation, and the tasks outlined above in each of these steps, could lead any other HFA successfully through this technical process.

Additionally, the intranet was built on an open-source CMS that is available for any developer to use. AHFC avoided proprietary systems with monthly or annual fees and focused on building a site their team could easily maintain and evolve.

Responded to a management challenge or opportunity

Alaska is roughly twice the size of Texas, creating a unique management challenge in connecting to and with AHFC's employees. Prior to the intranet, AHFC's communication came primarily through a monthly email "In House" newsletter that was sent to employees. While the email was a helpful tool, it couldn't provide immediate information and the format didn't encourage collaboration and team building. The new intranet gives employees immediate, searchable access to information and a platform to communicate in real time with fellow employees.

Achieved measurable improvements in agency operations

Shortly after the introduction of the intranet, AHFC conducted an internal employee survey to measure overall employee satisfaction with the new tool. The survey indicated that more than 80 percent of AHFC employees are using the new intranet daily. Additionally, GRPA employees no longer need to create and send a monthly email newsletter as information is simply posted as it comes in.

Benefits outweigh cost

AHFC was able to realize cost benefits by conducting much of the project using an internal team. Working on the open source CMS was also a source of savings. This cut down substantially on training, and it avoids the costs of off-the-shelf products that require a large initial payment and then monthly or annual fees.

The budget for the intranet rollout was \$15,000 with no yearly fees. This is significantly cheaper than other options reviewed, which ranged from \$18,000 - \$36,000 with yearly fees from \$21,000 - \$42,000. Beyond these savings, AHFC has also seen these important benefits:

- Allowing employees to find the information they need, when they need it.
- Ability to disseminate information immediately.
- Dramatically increasing user engagement in internal communications.

Demonstrated effective use of resources


AHFC used an internal team to conduct research, organize the information architecture, create wireframes, design the website, and migrate content. The website was built on the same CMS that is used for the external website, dramatically decreasing the technical training required.

Achieved strategic objectives

The project was launched on time and within budget and successfully accomplished the vision that was outlined at the outset of the project.



- Engagement Increases Use - Yes
- Brand Standards Alignment - Yes
- Intuitive Navigation - Yes
- Easy to Use - Yes

AHFC Team Intranet - Homepage




Departments ▾Contact Info ▾Quick Links ▾

Buzzing



Update



102 Messages




cbolling

6 hours ago

HomeChoice is happening tonight in Anchorage at HQ. If you haven't read it already, check out the reviews "In the News".





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lwells

3 days ago

lwells
High thin clouds and 55 in Soldotna. Leaves are starting to pop out!!





3



cbolling


3 days ago

Thanks Sharon, Anica and Amy! Hopefully we'll hear from Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Petersburg, Soldotna, Sitka, Valdez, Wrangell, Bethel, Nome and Seward sometime!




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In the News




Riley Neff Warner: Parts Unknown




HomeChoice class reviews




Resilient residents return to Channahon View






Homebuying Hacks:
Rent or buy?


Alaska Housing
Hack for Hamlet




Pride and joy in working for AHFC



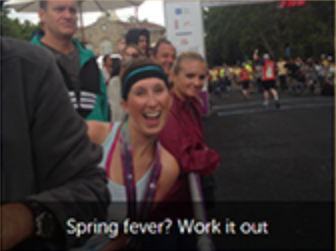
AHFC nabs best seat in the house



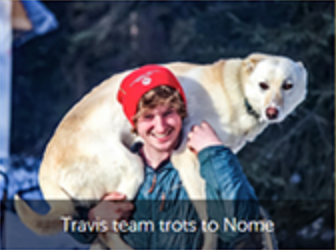
Staff Stuff




Not for deep dish pizza lovers



Spring fever? Work it out



Travis team trots to Nome



AHFC Team Intranet - Subpage Example




Departments ▾Contact Info ▾Quick Links ▾

SearchGo

Home / Departments / News Archive

News Archive

Increased support for homeless veterans



AHFC will be able to expand its services to Alaska's homeless veterans and their families. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has granted the corporation 24 extra Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers bringing the total number of Alaska vouchers up to 271.

VASH is a rental assistance program and applicants must be referred to AHFC by Alaska VA Healthcare System (AVAHS). This program is available in every AHFC community that offers the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The latest point-in-time count in January of the homeless population in Alaska showed 168 unsheltered veterans.

Comments