

# NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

**Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

Visit [ncsha.org/awards](http://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 Matt Cunningham at [mcunningham@ncsha.org](mailto:mcunningham@ncsha.org) or 202-624-5424.

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

**Entry Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**HFA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission Contact:** (Must be HFA Staff Member) \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**HFA:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## California Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program

### Program Overview

“I wondered if I would ever get out,” said Cheryl, an adult living with a disability who ended up in institutional care setting. At the age of 58, Cheryl, single and very independent, required the amputation of her right leg. The physical setback put Cheryl in a nursing care facility for nine months. She lost her apartment and was financially unable to afford another. Cheryl represents many disabled adults in California with extremely low incomes who reside in a long-term care facility and yet have the desire to return to community living. Their primary barrier is lack of suitable and affordable housing.

The California Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program (Section 811PRA) helped Cheryl move into her own apartment with the supportive services she needs to thrive independently.

Through the collaborative efforts of the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC), the state designed a demonstration program that complemented each entity’s expertise to effectively and efficiently use federal grants to assist disabled adults with a suitable and affordable place to live. The State of California was awarded nearly \$24 million in two funding rounds by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in partnership with the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide five-year renewable rental assistance to affordable housing projects serving persons with disabilities.

### How Does the Section 811 PRA Program Work?

Funds provide integrated housing units for extremely low-income, non-elderly persons with disabilities who are 18 to 61 years of age and reside in an institutional setting or are at serious risk of being institutionalized, at the time of admission. The disability of these tenants must allow them to qualify for community-based long-term care services and support provided under the Medi-Cal program. DHCS identifies potential candidates through various means including referrals by health care providers and community based organizations.

Project sponsors apply for long-term project-based rental assistance funding through the program. Each project requesting rental assistance funds has already received development financing from one of the state’s housing agencies. CalHFA and the project sponsor execute the Rental Assistance Contract for the project-based subsidy and administer the subsidy in a manner very similar to project-based Section 8 contracts.

Project sponsors must partner with a DHCS-California Community Transitions (CCT) provider, Regional Center serving developmentally disabled, or community organization willing to become a CCT provider for the residents, ensuring Medi-Cal-funded supportive services are in place and working, as well as following up on any additional needs. At the time of referral most candidates have very few personal items and no longer own basic household items. The CCT provider ensures that the transitioning resident comes home to a complete household set up with dishes, cookware, furniture, mattress, bedding, and towels, in addition to other sundries.

Approximately 618 units will be reserved for extremely low-income people with disabilities. Project rental assistance tenants will have access to a full continuum of Medi-Cal services.

### **Innovation**

California was the first state in the nation to move tenants into Section 811 PRA apartments. This program offers an independently-minded person the opportunity to live independently again and to be a contributing member within a vibrant community. They no longer have to live life by a pre-determined schedule of meals, activities and even bedtimes. Their care providers are no longer chosen by the facility for them. Cheryl and other Section 811 PRA residents relish that they can get a snack when they are hungry, hire their own care-givers and join community social groups.

The collaborative approach between five state agencies and the input from each entity's stakeholders, strengthens the programs' outcomes because each is able to offer expert advice early in the development, contributing to a well-rounded, fully vetted process.

Additionally, Section 811 PRA assistance is targeted to units in existing projects and projects under construction restricted to 50% AMI or below through a TCAC, HCD, or CalHFA development source. Section 811 PRA assistance pays the difference between the allowable rent and 30% of the resident's income. Because the Section 811 PRA units are part of an affordable housing community with existing affordable housing subsidies and restrictions, Section 811 rental subsidies are minimized and less costly than institutional residency.

### **Replicable**

The program design, even though early in its application, has been used to apply for an additional California Section 811 PRA program with a few modifications to target disabled individuals living on the streets in the city of Los Angeles, a large urban area with a high population of homeless. This submission won additional HUD funding in the second round awards in March 2015.

### **Problem Solving**

The foremost advantage is the humanizing approach to the needs of very-low income, disabled adults. The opportunity for a "normal" life with the supportive care services, set in the broader community is positively life-changing. Giving people the opportunity to live in their own home, with services and supports, gives them the ability to live their lives with more choice, and more opportunities for personal growth. It also strengthens personal connections to neighborhoods and the larger community. These connections are not only important to individual happiness and achievement of personal goals, but they are also critically important to fostering a better understanding among all of us of everyday issues facing persons with disabilities. Through this awareness or personal connection, we become collectively more understanding and respectful of all of our individual differences but, more importantly, we become more aware of the ways in which we are really similar to one another, and the ways in which we can all support one another as neighbors and community members regardless of disability, age, race, or other things that may sometimes seem to divide us.

Secondly, the state and federal funds available are used more efficiently. This program leverages the limited resources available for housing and healthcare services. Through this combination more people can benefit and even prosper in much more meaningful ways.

### **Results and Success**

The initial HUD funding awards were announced in February 2013 with California receiving a total of \$11,870,256. Development and implementation of California's program was opened to developers in August 2014 with applications continually accepted until all funds are committed.

The first project to receive Section 811 PRA funds has created 11 rent-subsidized units for disabled adults. The units were occupied during March and April 2015. Three additional projects have been awarded funds to create an additional 67 units and are in the process of outreach and leasing units. It is projected that approximately 240 affordable units will receive rental subsidies with the nearly \$12 million in first round funding.

During the second competitive HUD funding round in March 2015, California's program received \$11,985,436. The program details are being finalized. It is anticipated that in total 283 affordable units will receive rental subsidies with the nearly \$12 million in second round funding.

While implementing the program, the team planning the transitions prepared for possible issues related to the transition of residents from the very-controlled nursing facility to the self-sufficient environment of an apartment. Whether from careful planning or the adaptability of the residents, very few and minor issues have resulted. When speaking with the residents, they are much happier, have a more positive outlook on their future, proud of their homes and community and offer encouragement to the program staff to continue expand the program to help others, like themselves, have a better quality of life.

### **Putting a Price on It**

How do you put a price on independence, happiness, the self-worth that comes from a community that demonstrate they care about you and values you enough to help you achieve quality of life? If we were to step in to their shoes, we would consider it priceless. Even better, the costs are less expensive than housing someone in an institutional setting.

### **Effective Use of Resources**

It is projected that 240 affordable units will receive rental subsidies with nearly \$12 million in first round funding and 283 affordable units will receive rental subsidies with nearly \$12 million in second round funding. In total, \$24 million will assist over 500 people with years of affordable rents in quality apartments.

### **Objective**

The Section 811 PRA program objective is to better serve the Medicaid beneficiaries with disabilities ages 18-61 who have resided in a long-term health care facility or are at risk of institutionalization because of loss of housing and desire to return to community living by removing their primary barrier through suitable, supportive and affordable housing opportunities. This Section 811 PRA funding will advance several critical California goals:

- Enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to live in integrated community settings as required by the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision;
- Ending chronic homelessness by providing affordable housing linked to Medi-Cal services; and
- Reducing the costs associated with the avoidable utilization of skilled nursing facilities, emergency rooms, and hospital inpatient care for people who need access to affordable housing in order to avoid institutionalization and/or homelessness.

**Visual Aids**

*Garden Village Apartments – The first Section 811 PRA apartments in the nation to house tenants under the program.*



*Cheryl, one of the first tenants nationally to receive assistance from Section 811 PRA, shares her story and appreciation to two Sacramento County Supervisors and gets a hug from one of her supportive services providers.*

