

2014 Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

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

Entry Name _____

HFA _____

Submission Contact _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Qualified Entries must be received by **Tuesday, July 1, 2014**.

For more information about Qualified Entries, [click here to access the 2014 Entry Rules](#).

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

HFA _____

Entry Name _____

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

Background

Historically, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority's (IHCDA) compliance monitoring team was perceived as being the "bad guy" or only interested in "policing," not in forming relationships or engaging in meaningful exchanges with partners. While this was not in fact the intent of the monitoring staff, there is validity in the saying that "perception is reality." Though some of this perception may have simply been the occupational hazard due to the fact that owners and managers tend to be nervous when monitors arrive onsite and are typically elated to see them leave; it was also the case that the internal culture of the monitoring team was one of getting the job completed and ensuring compliance above fostering partnerships. In addition to these general concerns, IHCDA also received complaints from external partners that they didn't feel their input was considered by the compliance team.

In an effort to increase transparency, reputation and customer service satisfaction, IHCDA's compliance division created a Rental Compliance Working Group in 2010. Now in its fifth year, the Rental Compliance Working Group has been instrumental in changing the external perception of the IHCDA's compliance team.

The Compliance Working Group Structure & Logistics

The Rental Compliance Working Group (Working Group) consists of compliance and property management specialists representing 14 management companies that are highly active in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program in Indiana. These individuals participate in the Working Group as a direct way to share their ideas on compliance policies and procedures with IHCDA; serving as an informal advisory committee to the agency. Two IHCDA staff members, the Chief Real Estate Development Officer and one Compliance Auditor, attend all sessions and actively interact with the group members. IHCDA's capacity is primarily to moderate conversations and to take note of concerns or suggestions raised by the group members.

The Working Group, which meets five times per calendar year, is an opportunity for members to host the meetings at a tax credit property that is owned or managed by his or her company. In this way, the Working Group also serves as a forum for these groups to show off their properties to industry peers. One of the most remarkable accomplishments of the Working Group has in fact been the facilitation of camaraderie between industry peers.

At first, the group was unwilling to share ideas with one another, viewing their peers as agents of competing management companies. However, the group has now become a forum for the members to not only provide feedback to (or on occasion seek feedback from) IHCDA, but to also seek advice from each other on best practices.

Over the years, the Working Group has discussed a number of topics, including:

- **IHCDA Forms:**

In 2010, the Working Group thoroughly evaluated all of IHCDA's mandatory and sample compliance forms to identify areas of improvement including elimination of redundancy, clarification of unclear items and the creation of forms that were deemed missing. The Working Group is currently in the process of re-reviewing all forms in 2014 to ensure they remain timely.

- **IHCDA's Compliance Manual:**

IHCDA releases an annual update to its tax credit compliance manual and updates to its HOME rental compliance manual as needed. The Working Group reviews every draft manual and provides feedback on areas for improvement and clarification ahead of the official releases.

- **Online Reporting:**

IHCDA created its own internal database and external online reporting system for tenant data management. The Working Group frequently provides feedback on the functionality of the online reporting system.

Given the success of the Rental Compliance Working Group, which focuses primarily on issues related to Section 42 and HOME rental compliance, IHCDA's Real Estate Department has recently started a second group; The Federal Programs Compliance Working Group. Formed in late 2013, this supplementary group will meet twice a year to discuss issues related to the implementation of the agency's HOME or CDBG award, including both program specific requirements as well items related to federal cross-cutting regulations such as Davis Bacon, Section 3 reporting and the Uniform Relocation Act.

Benefits of the Compliance Working Group

Through the Working Groups, IHCDA has seen a number of positive outcomes, including:

- **Increased attention to external input and perception:**

Through the awareness of the Working Group and the example set by that initiative, IHCDA's compliance team has become more focused on gathering input on policies and procedures.

- **Changed mentality of compliance staff:**

The Working Group has served as an example and reminder to IHCDA's staff that even those in a compliance role can forge strong partnerships and provide customer service, while still maintaining program integrity through monitoring.

- **Changed perception from external staff:**

IHCDA annually conducts an agency-wide customer satisfaction survey. The Real Estate Department's compliance team consistently scores high on customer satisfaction, receiving comments that the compliance team is interested in forming partnerships and in listening to feedback. These comments would not have been received five years ago.

- **Input from industry experts:**

While IHCDA's compliance team members have diverse backgrounds; most of them do not in fact have previous experience doing property management. Because of this, our internal team may create a policy without realizing the effects it will have on daily management activities. The Working Group has allowed IHCDA to receive this type of feedback from those who have the

more practical experience with program compliance and management. This has been invaluable as we evaluate our policies and procedures.

- **Reduction of redundancy:**

Specifically related to the evaluation of IHCDA mandatory or sample forms, the Working Group has been instrumental in helping identify forms or items on forms that are unnecessary, repetitive or unclear. As the practitioners who are working with income verification documents daily, these individuals can provide valuable input on which forms are capturing too little or too much information, and which are confusing for applicants or residents to complete.

- **Increased transparency:**

Partners now understand IHCDA's thought process related to compliance policies and receive information regarding upcoming initiatives and policy changes.

Why nominate this for recognition?

IHCDA believes that the Compliance Working Groups meets the qualifications for achievement under the category of "Rental Housing: Multifamily Management." Specifically, IHCDA believes this initiative meets NCSHA's entry requirements in the following ways:

Innovative

While many HFAs may request public comments when specific policies are being rewritten, IHCDA believes having an ongoing (five times per year) meeting with partners is an innovative approach to forming relationships and seeking input. Additionally, in many circumstances partnership building and external input is primarily sought on the development side (i.e in the QAP process). Consistently engaging compliance partners in conversations is a unique and proactive approach which fosters partnership and trust.

Replicable

This approach could easily be replicated across the country by HFAs that are interested in improving the relationships between compliance monitoring staff and partners. The only requirement is that the staff must be willing to organize the group, schedule meetings and listen.

Benefits outweigh costs

The benefits have been numerous as described above. The only cost has been minor travel (usually all meetings are local) and the cost of staff time to attend the Working Group sessions.

Effectively employ partnerships

This entire initiative is about forging strong partnerships between the HFA and its partners. Traditionally, compliance monitors are not seen as engaged partners, but this initiative proves that they in fact can be focused on partnerships and customer service while ensuring all programmatic requirements are fulfilled.