



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

MassHousing
Mapping Impact: MassHousing on the Orange Line Newsletter
Communications – Creative Media

What do you get when you combine data visualization, location intelligence and creative content? For MassHousing, the result was an impactful online feature that highlighted the Agency's \$1.5 billion investment along the Orange Line subway line in and around Boston.

About the Orange Line

The Orange Line is one of four subway lines operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA). The 11.1-mile route begins in the city of Malden in the north and passes through several Boston neighborhoods before arriving in Jamaica Plain in city's southwestern corner. On the average weekday, there are more than 200,000 trips between the Orange Line's 19 stations, which serve communities, neighborhoods and residents that are socially, economically and racially diverse.

Travel the full length of the Orange Line, and you'll pass 67 multifamily communities with 8,350 units that have received more than \$900 million in MassHousing financing. Add to that the \$637 million in first mortgage loans that have helped 4,018 families buy their first home along the route, and the overall MassHousing investment tops \$1.5 billion.

A Novel Approach

In 2017, MassHousing sought to highlight the Agency's lending and impact along the MBTA's Orange Line. The route provided an excellent opportunity for several reasons: it traveled through diverse communities; it included some of the most notable financings in MassHousing's history; and it was home to several new MassHousing initiatives as well as key nonprofit partners.

We initially decided to use our MassHousing Update newsletter as the mechanism for delivering the Orange Line message. MassHousing Update is sent to roughly 1,200 subscribers each month, and has open and click rates above the industry averages.

Rather than use the traditional newsletter template and format – which generally consists of a series of blurbs and images that link to longer articles on our blog – MassHousing decided on a different approach. The Orange Line email newsletter would feature a single, striking graphic and introductory text that linked to a customized map detailing MassHousing-financed multifamily communities, homeownership lending and key partners. It was a new and novel approach, but one that had great potential.

From Concept to Creation

While MassHousing maintains a schedule of newsletter themes for upcoming issues, the newsletter is generally produced over the course of several weeks. The Orange Line issue was no exception, and the new approach presented several challenges, particularly within the tight timeframe. The biggest challenge was to gather the data: which developments were “on” the Orange Line; what was the homeownership lending in these areas; who are the key community partners. In addition, we needed to determine how best to present the information in a user friendly, visually appealing, interactive manner.

To gather data, the Communications team enlisted the assistance of the Rental and HomeOwnership business lines. The Agency has made a significant investment in business intelligence, and strives to be a data driven organization.

MassHousing uses Pitney Bowes software – MapMarker and MapInfo – to geocode and analyze our multifamily portfolio. Geocoding gives us latitude and longitude (point level) information on every property we finance. Our location intelligence solution then allows us to analyze that point level information from a variety of perspectives including transportation, demographic, municipal and political. Together, these points of view allow us to understand not just the location of our properties but the communities we serve.

Using these tools, we identified 67 rental developments within a mile of the Orange Line. This does not include those communities within that range that might be served by other MBTA train lines. Along with development name and address, we also queried the unit breakdown, developer/owner and initial loan amount.

We gathered homeownership lending information by querying borrower data by zip code in our business intelligence system. We identified prominent community partners in both our rental and homeownership business through outreach to business line staff.

For presentation, we decided to create a custom Google Map, which could be embedded on a page on the MassHousing website, masshousing.com. Google Maps are free to create and do not require any coding or technical savvy. The map would have different icons to signify mortgage lending, existing rental developments, developments under construction and community partners. For multifamily properties, all listings included the developer/owner, unit breakdown and initial loan amount. Featured developments were set apart with icons of a different color. Whenever possible, photos from the Agency’s archives accompanied each property.

The email newsletter itself is highlighted by a graphic that shows an Orange Line car along with a rendering of a development under construction that received financing through one of MassHousing’s priority programs: the \$100 Million Workforce Housing Initiative.

A Successful Effort

The MassHousing on the Orange Line newsletter was sent Friday, April 28. Fridays tend to be the least desirable weekday for promotional emails, but this edition bucked that trend. The Orange Line newsletter was sent to 1,218 recipients, was opened by 399 and saw 143 click-throughs. The open rate of 39% was above both MassHousing's average of 34% and the industry average of 23%. The click-through rate of 36% was above MassHousing's average of 27% and the industry average of 10%. This does not include clicks from the MassHousing websites and via social media.

It was a new approach with a tight timeframe, but thanks to a collaborative effort and the combination of accessible data and online tools, MassHousing was able to deliver an impactful newsletter that showcases some of its premier projects and partnerships, past and present.

MassHousing on the Orange Line Email



I am always struck by the impact MassHousing has along the MBTA's Orange Line.

Heading south from Oak Grove, you'll see several large multifamily communities in Malden, Everett, Medford and Somerville. As you enter Boston, you'll pass more and more affordable communities in Charlestown, the North End, Downtown, Chinatown, the Back Bay, Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. In all, you'll pass **67 multifamily communities** with **8,350 units** that have received more than **\$900 million** in MassHousing financing. Add to that the **\$637 million** in first mortgage loans that have helped **4,018 families** buy their first home along the route, and the overall MassHousing investment tops **\$1.5 billion**.

This month's *MassHousing Update** highlights [MassHousing's footprint along the Orange Line](#). Click the image above and you'll be whisked away to an interactive map that shows our rental developments and homeownership lending along the Orange Line. We've also highlighted a few of our community partners as well as a pair of new developments under construction that will receive funds from our [Workforce Housing Initiative](#).

We hope you enjoy this [new approach](#) as much as we have enjoyed assembling it.

--Tim Sullivan, MassHousing Executive Director

* Best viewed in Google Chrome

Connect with us

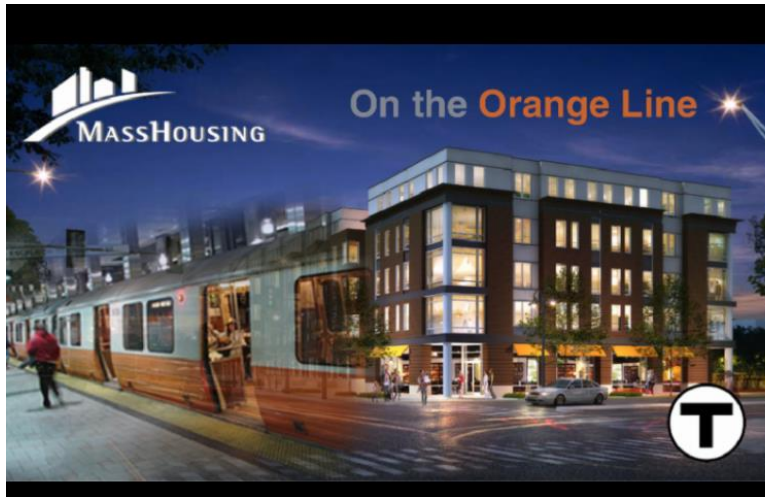


Map Embedded on MassHousing.com

View the interactive map at <https://www.masshousing.com/orangeline>

The screenshot shows the MassHousing website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the MassHousing logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are menu items: HOME OWNERSHIP, DEVELOPERS, RENTAL HOUSING, DIVERSITY, ABOUT US, and PRESS ROOM. The main content area features a section titled "MassHousing on the Orange Line" with a descriptive paragraph and a call to action to navigate the map. Below the text is an interactive map of the Orange Line area, showing various development icons. A legend below the map explains the icons: MassHousing Multifamily Community (blue house icon), Featured Multifamily Community (red house icon), MassHousing Development Under Construction (purple house icon), MassHousing HomeOwnership Lending (green house icon), and MassHousing Community Partner (yellow house icon). At the bottom of the page, there are links for home, contacts, privacy, terms & conditions, site security, log in, site map, and accessibility, along with the Equal Housing Lender logo.

Facebook Post



MH MassHousing
Published by Hootsuite [?]
Like This Page · April 28 · *

MassHousing's investment along the #MBTA Orange Line tops \$1.5 billion, has supported 12,000 homes <http://ow.ly/LGOp30bgjRt>

Tag Photo Add Location Edit

Like Comment Share Bottlet

Jimmy Mwhia, Hilda Cruz and 5 others

MH Write a comment...

LinkedIn Post

MH MassHousing
1mo

MassHousing's investment along the #MBTA Orange Line tops \$1.5 billion, has supported 12,000 homes <http://ow.ly/LGOp30bgjRt>

17 Likes

Twitter Post



MassHousing @MassHousing · May 2

MassHousing's investment along the Orange Line tops 12,000 units and \$1.5 billion! Check out our interactive map ow.ly/DmLm30bmC8i



🔙 1 ❤️ 2 📊