

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: _____

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.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
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
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

MassHousing
Rental Housing – Multifamily Management
Subsidy Roundtables

As a Project-Based Contract Administrator (PBCA) for HUD for more than 16 years, MassHousing has a great deal of experience with subsidy administration. Several years ago, HUD suspended Management and Occupancy Reviews (MOR) in the PBCA portfolio. This was a challenging directive from HUD because it meant that the properties that MassHousing, as contract administrator, was charged with overseeing would not be assessed on an annual basis as they had been. It is important to note that the change to conducting annual MORs of these properties had been touted as one of the great advantages of the new role of Contract Administrators. Many of these properties had not been visited in many years, and the role that this annual oversight played in their ongoing maintenance was significant.

After HUD had suspended MORs in the PBCA Portfolio, MassHousing identified inconsistency in Section 8 subsidy compliance which compounded into delayed or foregone payments for Section 8 owners. In response, MassHousing developed an interactive forum for Agency staff to meet with site managers, regional compliance staff and accounting staff to identify sources of discrepancies and assist with ways to mitigate problems with Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to owners. MassHousing introduced Subsidy Roundtable meetings in April of 2014 to offer tips for Section 8 owners and management agents resolving Section 8 subsidy receivable issues and to share techniques on reconciling monthly voucher and transmission reports.

The purpose of the Subsidy Roundtable is to foster a better working relationship between MassHousing's Subsidy Administration staff and owner/agent staff. Discussion provides owner/agents with a better understanding of MassHousing's role in Section 8 Contract Administration, specifically voucher processing. The focus of this meeting is Section 8 HAP voucher reconciliation, and how best to utilize the tools, so that owner/agent staff is able to resolve issues without having to call or E-mail MassHousing staff and wait to connect with them on a response. The Subsidy Roundtable discussion also provides owner/agent staff an opportunity to voice their concerns and suggestions as to how MassHousing staff can improve customer service.

MassHousing's Subsidy Roundtable forum was in some cases the only face-to-face interaction site staff had with Agency staff during HUD's MOR suspension. The Roundtable served as an introduction for newer staff to various staff in the Section 8 subsidy processing approval process. The Subsidy Roundtable meetings are structured as follows: introductions of participants, introduction to portfolio, responsibilities of each Roundtable participant, review of reports, HAP voucher reconciliation tips, outstanding issues, common problems, HAP contract renewal/rent adjustment process and new guidance/resources.

Subsidy Roundtables are voluntary and available to all owners and agents in the portfolio. Roundtables are marketed at various industry events and conducted by request of the owner/agent. Each Roundtable is different depending on the attendees and organizational structure of the owner and agent. The meeting is designed to be a small, open dialogue with Agency staff leading a discussion and answering participant questions. MassHousing gains knowledge on how to better work with site staff as each company is structured differently. An example is that voucher reports are sent to a compliance manager, but the site is following up on rejected certifications. In this situation, we are able to provide both parties with the reports to obtain a better and quicker response when issues arise.

A brief synopsis of each element of the training is included below:

Introductions of participants: Agency staff is introduced to site and management company staff and pertinent management company officials.

Introduction to portfolio: Discussion focuses on MassHousing in its capacity as Section 8 Contract Administrator and includes an in-depth portfolio review which identifies variations in HUD's PBCA and TCA administrative protocol.

Responsibilities of each roundtable participant: In this section, discussion revolves around the role or required actions of owner/agent staff and Contract Administration staff. This illustrates that each role is critically important to the overall success of the development and to implementation of Section 8 compliance and payments.

Review of reports: MassHousing staff reviews each monthly report that is transmitted to the site. MassHousing introduces other reports that may be of interest and use to site staff when working to resolve problem units and certifications.

HAP voucher reconciliation tips: Simultaneous with reviewing reports, MassHousing advises attendees of frequent problems and ways to correct a certification and/or deficiency. For newer staff, who have not had the benefit of working with a variety of reports it is useful to highlight the benefits of certain reports. This has been used extensively while reviewing enterprise income verification (EIV) discrepancies and/or repayment agreements.

Outstanding issues: In a number of instances, Subsidy Roundtables are a result of subsidy receivables and ownership experiencing cash-flow problems. Typically, MassHousing has knowledge of historical problems with payments, even when site staff turnover and in turn a void is created at the site. This information sharing allows site staff to make quick progress in resolving subsidy receivables.

Common problems: This section is similar to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for TRACS compliant certifications. FAQs contain common problems and may relate to new HUD guidance.

HAP contract renewal/rent adjustment process - owner/agent staff introduced company policy: Owner and agents use dedicated staff when processing HAP contract renewal activities. To provide continual training and improve efficiency, MassHousing staff conducts an overview of HUD's Contract Renewal and Rent Adjustment processing. Typically, owner/agent staff is engaged to inform site staff of their company policy and MassHousing staff discusses internal processing. Specifically, funding process and reasons for delays are discussed so that owner/agent staff has an overall knowledge of the renewal "life cycle".

New guidance and resources: MassHousing uses this time to advise owner and agent staff of new and forthcoming policy issues. These issues relate to HUD and MassHousing's operating policies that will be incorporated or amended in the next few months.

Since MassHousing introduced the Subsidy Roundtable discussions in April of 2014, 15 owners/agents have participated. This represents about one-third of the Section 8 portfolio. Perhaps most importantly MassHousing has assisted in processing problem certifications worth \$3.2 million in subsidy payments!