

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: Creatively Combating Homelessness in Michigan

HFA: Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

Submission Contact: (Must be HFA Staff Member) Mary Lou Keenon Email: keenonm@michigan.gov

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

Using the Housing Choice Voucher and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs to combat homelessness in Michigan

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

HFA: Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

Entry Name: Creatively Combating Homeless in Michigan

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 type="radio"/> Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="radio"/> Encouraging New Production	<input checked="" 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			

Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Creatively Combating Homelessness in Michigan

Background and Overview/Description

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) holds combatting homelessness as one of its foremost priorities and thus has dedicated significant resources toward this cause. The Authority has chosen to use its Housing Choice Voucher program, which serves more than 28,000 households, and its 9 percent (9%) Housing Tax Credit program to serve our most vulnerable citizens.

The Housing Choice Voucher program utilizes a variety of methods to house those experiencing homelessness and most recently expanded its **Moving Up program** in 2015. The 9% Housing Tax Credit program dedicates 25 percent of the available credit toward the creation of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) developments and the most recent Qualified Allocation Plan adopted in 2016 further enhances the implementation of the program.

Housing Choice Voucher Program

MSHDA is a statewide Public Housing Authority (PHA) that through its Administrative Plan **preferences its portfolio of 28,000 of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to people experiencing homelessness.** MSHDA is the fifth largest HCV-only PHA in the country. This practice requires that each of Michigan's 83 counties generate a waiting list for those experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Preference waiting list is populated by the HUD-required central point of intake within each Continuum of Care (CoC) Body, known in Michigan as a Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) and by doing so, **Coordinated Entry** practices are strengthened. Along with populating the waiting list, the HARA creates a housing plan and refers people living in homelessness to the resources needed to stabilize and lead them to self-sufficiency. The HARA recertifies homelessness every 120 days and those households that are no longer homeless drop off the waiting list. This practice keeps the waiting lists shorter and ensures that only those that have very recently experienced homelessness are prioritized for rental assistance. MSHDA adopted a full homeless preference for its HCV program in 2010. As of June 2016, **10,953** tenant based voucher households have been assisted through the homeless preference where **7,823** are currently receiving rental assistance through the MSHDA HCV program.

MSDHA administers a **Project Based Voucher (PBV) program**, which is a component of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. MSHDA's PBV program targets extremely low-income permanent supportive housing populations (chronically homeless, homeless [all HUD categories] and special needs) and attaches rental assistance to specific housing units. Project Based Vouchers are awarded to owners of properties through an owner proposal selection process. In order for owners to participate in the program, the owner must have received financing for the development via a competitive process through MSHDA such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), HOME or other MSHDA financing within the past three years.

Owners selected through the award process partner with local service agencies to develop a service coordination plan for the permanent supportive housing families residing in the PBV units. The plan must demonstrate ongoing commitment by the owner and the service agencies to assure sustained availability of supportive services. Individual resident service plans are developed to assess and reassess the needs, goals and preferences for the families served. Plans include connecting the families with community services, helping families access vocational or other employment opportunities, substance abuse counseling, life skills training,

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educational opportunities, transportation assistance, housekeeping skills; budget counseling and continued occupancy.

Since the inception of the PBV program in 2004, **MSHDA has awarded over 2,300 PBVs** to owners that have developed units specifically for permanent supportive housing families across the state of Michigan. As allowed under the federal regulations, MSHDA is committed to setting aside 20 percent of its Housing Choice Voucher portfolio for the PBV program.

PBV Property Spotlight: **(See Attachment)**

Silver Star I and Silver Star II: Both properties are located in Battle Creek, Michigan (Calhoun County) on the grounds of the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital serving homeless veterans. Silver Star I consists of 75 one-bedroom units and Silver Star II consists of 100 one-bedroom units. Each site has one two-bedroom unit for an onsite manager. The owner received an award of LIHTC, HOME funds and MSHDA financing for each property. Silver Star I was completed in 2009 and Silver Star II was completed in 2013.

The owner has partnered with the local VA, Continuum of Care, Zero Day Support Services and the Mental Health Authority for Calhoun County for applicant referrals and supportive services for homeless veterans. These units provide the next step in housing for homeless veterans who have participated in community-based transitional housing programs and other domicile-related or homeless services provided by the VA or other nonprofit service providers. Supportive services available to all residents include case management, psychiatric services, therapeutic services, nursing/health services, substance abuse treatment, rehabilitation services, skilled training, continuing education and gaining access to entitlement programs.

All units are fully furnished. Residents have access to a community kitchen, laundry facilities, fitness center, computer training, outdoor patio, green house, theatre, and separate rooms for job-training, music and arts and crafts.

The Authority also has allocated HCV to be used in the **Moving Up program** whereby we partner with Continuums of Care (CoCs) to transition HUD-funded CoC Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) residents to tenant based HCV. This program was expanded in 2015 to include six CoCs with a total of 335 vouchers. This program also allows families to transition to a HCV after they have remained stably housed and no longer need significant supportive services. This frees up their HUD CoC funded PSH resources for a new household that is experiencing homelessness and in need of intensive supportive services. CoCs have used this program to reinforce coordinated entry and prioritization for those most vulnerable for their newly available units.

Nine Percent (9%) Housing Tax Credit PSH Set-Aside

Through the federal **9% Housing Tax Credit program**, **MSHDA has created over 1,500 units for people that are homeless and/or have special needs since August 2008.** Through MSHDA's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), 25 percent of the available credit is set aside for developers willing to provide ongoing affordable housing and services to homeless and special-

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needs households. MSHDA has an addendum in the QAP dedicated to the creation of PSH and uses it to drive national best practices like Housing First.

Changes to the 2017-18 QAP, adopted in 2016, include:

- A change in location points to focus on areas of the state that have the greatest incidence of homelessness,
- A requirement for all PSH developments to operate with **Housing First** principals
- A requirement to use the statewide-approved assessment tool, **Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)**, in the screening and prioritization of applicants as a part of the coordinated entry process to ensure those with the highest needs are being served, and
- Inclusion of a new target population for super utilizers of Medicaid that are experiencing homelessness. This target population will be determined by matching statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data with Medicaid databases to aim housing assistance and supportive services to those with complex care needs with the goal of better health outcomes and lower Medicaid utilization.

Summary

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority directs its mainstream federal resources in the Housing Choice Voucher and 9% Housing Tax Credit programs toward those experiencing homelessness and continues to innovate its programming to better serve the most vulnerable in our state. Through these and other efforts of Michigan's Campaign to End Homelessness, Michigan saw a 6 percent reduction in literal homelessness in 2015.

These creative ways of serving the nation's most vulnerable individuals and families is replicable in HFAs that administer these federal programs in every state. The same is true of forming strategic partnerships with other state agencies and nonprofits. There are no additional costs, the work to serve the homeless population is shared among partners and there are a multitude of benefits. In the end, there are actually cost savings as housing the homeless with Housing First principals saves money in the long-term.

MSHDA has achieved its strategic objectives with this innovative use of federal funds while responding to an important housing need in Michigan. Our track record of successfully housing the homeless proves that innovation and creativity go hand in hand to not only make a difference to our targeted customers but also to the citizens of the state of Michigan.

Attachment



The goal of Silver Star is to provide affordable housing as well as a variety of resources to assist veterans with physical, mental and emotional healing. Silver Star also offers job skills training in a supportive environment. Residents have access to a gym, basketball court, library, movie theater, wood shop, art room and music room.