

# NCSHA 2016 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

**Deadline: Wednesday, June 15, 2016**

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 [awards@ncsha.org](mailto:awards@ncsha.org) or 202-624-7710.

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

**Entry Name:** How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency

**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.

Engaged employees make for a successful organization and MSHDA is on the path to improve the culture of the workplace. It is still evolving.

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

**HFA:** Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

**Entry Name:** How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency

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"/> Creative Media <input type="radio"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters	<input type="radio"/> Empowering New Buyers <input type="radio"/> Encouraging New Production <input type="radio"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation	<input type="radio"/> Federal Advocacy <input type="radio"/> State Advocacy	<input type="radio"/> Financial <input checked="" type="radio"/> Human Resources <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 type="radio"/> Multifamily Management <input type="radio"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation	<input type="radio"/> Combating Homelessness <input type="radio"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs	<input type="radio"/> Special Achievement	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

## **Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency**

### **Overview**

Soon after Michigan Governor Rick Snyder was elected, he announced his campaign to “reinvent Michigan.” A major component of his plan was to “reinvent our government” by creating an Office of Good Government to lead the way in establishing “good government” for the people of Michigan.

After three statewide surveys conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2012, 2013 and 2015, MSHDA results were dismal at worst and depressing at best. The surveys were conducted during some challenging times at MSHDA, including several changes in leadership. Conditions were not ideal when new leadership came in and made it a priority to stabilize the agency, improve morale and the workplace environment and lend support to the Governor’s mandate to establish good government for the people of Michigan – beginning with MSHDA employees.

Following the March 2015 statewide survey that produced less than desirable results and with new and committed leadership in place, we were charged with creating an Employee Engagement Action Plan (**see attachments**) to act as a blueprint for improving the culture at MSHDA based entirely on employee input as indicated in the results of the statewide survey. Intended as a short-term project, the 21-member team brought together for this monumental task made such an impression on leadership with the final product that the Employee Engagement Committee (EEC) was given permanent status. What was even more remarkable was the establishment of a new MSHDA division, the Office of Employee Services (OES), to administer, implement and monitor the action plan (and the ensuing division action plans) as well as supporting employees in a variety of ways, including all internal communications, training and career development and other employee-centered events and activities.

The EEC also received the highest team honors that MSHDA awards during this year’s awards ceremony. The following is a quote from the nomination made by leadership:

“It is with respect and gratitude that I nominate the EEC for consideration to receive the High Performing Team MSHDA Employee Recognition Award for far exceeding expectations by creating not just an action plan, but a cultural transformation plan that the Executive Director and I were inspired to respond in kind by creating an Office of Employee Services and establishing a permanent EEC to help the office implement the plan. The EEC saw the big picture, a human-centered environment where MSHDA can continue to obtain and maintain employees that clearly know the roles they play within the Authority, and leadership that encourages and respects the opinion of their staff, ultimately making MSHDA the enviable state agency.”

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of the employee engagement initiative at MSHDA was and continues to be the improvement of workplace culture, management effectiveness and communication as well as accountability at all levels – from leadership and management right down to front-line staff – the people that perform the everyday operations that make MSHDA’s mission possible.

### **Implementation**

We introduced the Employee Engagement Action Plan in a very innovative and entertaining way, primarily to show that leadership was serious about the plan and intended to continue and maintain it until the next statewide survey when a new action plan would be created.

## Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency

The following links will take you to seven videos produced by the seven-time Emmy Award winners from the PBS show “Under the Radar,” a show that MSHDA partially sponsors with another state agency. The videos cost us nothing to produce but the results were astounding and got everyone’s attention. Each of the videos focused on one of the action steps and each one featured a member of the Employee Engagement Committee.

Week #1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96uJngQLeCk&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer&index=1>

Week #2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuGGUAJ90I0&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer&index=2>

Week #3

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_B1Wonf2wY&index=3&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_B1Wonf2wY&index=3&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer)

Week #4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=283NPd7nnZU&index=4&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer>

Week #5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNBdFqUPJ0M&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer&index=5>

Week #6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NuvfoGa37Q&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer&index=6>

Week #7

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqXIRyZBZWg&index=7&list=PLncl3p8RHv0lgzzkL1Br57GRfDBu8fmer>

### **The Next Step**



The next step in making this whole initiative work and also an action step in each of our action plans was a MSHDA-wide pulse survey. The survey was conducted in May of this year and was made up of the same questions that appeared on the statewide survey so we could measure the results fairly accurately. The questions included both those that indicated a need for

improvement as well as those that provided strong agree responses. The purpose: see where we need to work harder for the upcoming statewide survey and to make certain we are maintaining our areas of strength. The results showed that we nearly doubled our participation rate from the last pulse survey and a preliminary analysis of the data shows that we have made improvements and even moved the needle upwards in several significant areas. But there is still work to do in preparation for October’s statewide survey, and leadership is in full support of making changes based on the input from employees.

## **Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency**

### **Management Innovation**

MSHDA's employee engagement initiative is definitely innovative, but not costly and can be replicated easily in other HFAs or in any organization. No new employees were hired, promotional activities are all carried out in-house or services are creatively obtained at no cost to the Authority.

We responded to a great need within our agency and are achieving measurable improvements. Productivity is increasing as employees feel included in decisions that affect them. Our engagement levels are increasing as we continue to tackle each of our action steps, one by one, and are committed to maintaining a high level of support to continue down this path.

### **Summary**

The term employee engagement is tossed around liberally in organizations worldwide, almost to its own detriment. It is often used interchangeably with employee satisfaction, even though a satisfied employee is not necessarily an engaged employee. Studies show that employee engagement, even when an organization is committed to all sorts of plans and programs to promote it, fall way short of achieving success. The average is somewhere between 30 percent and 38 percent. It is even more difficult to establish a healthy culture of employee engagement in government organizations at all levels.

MSHDA is already above the average and working on improving. The Office of Employee Services, in addition to employee engagement, also is addressing process improvement (using the Lean Process Improvement model) and performance transformation. In fact, a new department recently has been created at the state level, the Office of Performance Transformation (OPT), that MSHDA's OES is fully engaged with and committed to carrying out the new department's mission within state government.

Employee engagement, quite simply, boils down to effective two-way communication – from top leadership and management down to front-line staff and back up again. Listening to employees, gaining their trust and follow-through equals success.

A portion of MSHDA's strategic plan is devoted to establishing a culture of continuous improvement at MSHDA – one that is never-ending but continues to live and grow, even with changes in leadership and administrations.




**Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)**  
**How MSHDA Makes Employee Engagement Work in a Government Agency**

# **Attachments**

## **(MSHDA Employee Engagement Action Plans)**

# Accountability

Overall Summary			
<b>Action Plan Name:</b>	Establish a plan to increase accountability for all MSHDA employees		
<b>Action Plan Owner:</b>	OES/Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler		
<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<p>Establish a plan to increase accountability and transparency that addresses the obligation of both MSHDA leadership and individual employees to account for their activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner.</p> <p>This action plan will be shared with all MSHDA staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.</p> <p>This plan has no known contingencies and has been approved at the executive level.</p>		
<b>Survey Items Addressed with 2015 Agree Scores:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I am aware of Good Government initiatives taking place in my department. 43%</i></li> <li>- <i>I have seen meaningful action taken in my department as a result of the last employee survey. 37%</i></li> <li>- <i>MSHDA leadership is creating a culture of continuous improvement. 48%</i></li> <li>- <i>MSHDA leadership is trustworthy.56%</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Action Plan Justification:</b>	By creating an atmosphere of trust and “I’ve got your back,” attitude, MSHDA, as an organization, can overcome past challenges and start building a culture that embodies the components of the Good Government initiative.		
<b>Action Plan Start Date:</b>	September 1, 2015	<b>Action Plan End Date:</b>	September 2016
Financials			
<b>Estimated Action Plan Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Project Cost</b>		
<b>Estimated Action Plan Benefits</b>	<b>Estimated Project Benefit</b>		
Action Steps			

Action Step	Owner	Start Date	End Date	Status
1. Each MSHDA division will create a divisional action plan.	Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler	August 2015	October 31, 2015	
2. Create a method by which the divisional action plans will be communicated to all staff initially and progress will continue to be monitored, tracked and communicated regularly throughout the year.	Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler	October 19, 2015	December 1, 2015	
3. Establish a permanent Employee Engagement Team to monitor and serve as liaisons for effective communication among divisions and management in keeping with the divisional action plans.	Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler	September 1, 2015	Ongoing	
4. Conduct a pulse survey to gauge progress. Results of the survey will be communicated to staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.	Mary Lou Keenon/Jennifer Ferguson	May 2, 2016	May 13, 2016	

# Workplace Environment


Overall Summary			
<b>Action Plan Name:</b>	Improve Workplace Environment		
<b>Action Plan Owner:</b>	OES/Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler		
<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<p>Improve the workplace environment for all MSHDA employees, focusing on human-centered management and IT solutions.</p> <p>This action plan will be shared with all MSHDA staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.</p> <p>This plan has no known contingencies and has been approved at the executive level.</p>		
<b>Survey Items Addressed and 2015 Agree Scores:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>My workgroup has a climate in which diverse perspectives are encouraged and valued. 56%</i></li> <li>- <i>Sufficient effort is made to get the opinions of people who work here. 55%</i></li> <li>- <i>MSHDA leadership is interested in the well-being of employees. 56%</i></li> <li>- <i>My career goals can be met at the State of Michigan. 51%</i></li> <li>- <i>Outdated or lack of technology listed as MSHDA's #1 barrier to productivity. 27%</i></li> <li>- <i>Employees at the State of Michigan are able to contribute to their fullest potential (without regard to such characteristics as age, race, ethnicity, disability, etc.). 57%</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Action Plan Justification:</b>	By creating an environment where employee growth and the development of people skills is encouraged, we can increase MSHDA's overall team health, enhance IT strategies to improve data storage solutions and increase respect for personal life balance.		
<b>Action Plan Start Date:</b>	September 1, 2015	<b>Action Plan End Date:</b>	September 2016
<b>Financials</b>			
<b>Estimated Action Plan Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Project Cost</b>		
<b>Estimated Action Plan Benefits</b>	<b>Estimated Project Benefit</b>		



Action Steps				
Action Step	Owner	Start Date	End Date	Status
1. Develop a set of interview questions for leadership positions that are specific and mandatory for measuring effective management skills prior to hiring.	Angela Huntoon	September 2015	October 2015	In progress
2. Implement an open recruiting process for special projects that arise so all MSHDA employees have an opportunity to develop new or enhance old skills.	Angela Huntoon	September 2015	December 31, 2015	 On going
3. Implement a plan expanding flexibility in work station locations.	Angela Huntoon	September 2015	December 31, 2015	
4. Implement or enhance IT solutions to improve data access, security and communications.	Linda Beachnau/IT staff	September 2015	December 31, 2015	In progress
5. Develop a plan to assist staff in interacting effectively with the people we work with and the people we serve that are of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds,	Grace Ramirez	September 2015	December 31, 2015	Training sessions conducted On going
6. Conduct a pulse survey to gauge progress. Results of the survey will be communicated to staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.	Mary Lou Keenon/Jennifer Ferguson	May 2, 2016	May 13, 2016	

# Leadership Communication & Effectiveness

Overall Summary			
<b>Action Plan Name:</b>	Improve Leadership Communication and Effectiveness		
<b>Action Plan Owner:</b>	OES/Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler		
<b>Action Plan Description</b>	<p>Establish steps to improve communication skills and management techniques for leadership, promoting inclusion, trust, and awareness for all MSHDA employees.</p> <p>This action plan will be shared with all MSHDA staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.</p> <p>This plan has no known contingencies and has been approved at the executive level.</p>		
<b>Survey Items Addressed with 2015 Agree Scores:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MSHDA keeps employees informed about matters affecting us. 54%</li> <li>- MSHDA leadership communicates openly and honestly with employees. 55%</li> <li>- MSHDA leadership gives employees a clear picture of the direction we are headed. 48%</li> <li>- MSHDA leadership is creating a culture of continuous improvement. 48%</li> <li>- MSHDA is serious about change and reinvention to achieve good government. 57%</li> <li>- I am confident department leadership is leading us in the right direction for success. 51%</li> <li>- MSHDA leadership makes decisions in a timely fashion. 44%</li> </ul>		
<b>Action Plan Justification:</b>	To establish a regular two-way line of communication to keep employees informed in a timely manner, promoting inclusion and trust and thereby improving manager techniques and communications skills.		
<b>Action Plan Start Date:</b>	September 1, 2015	<b>Action Plan End Date:</b>	September 2016
Financials			
<b>Estimated Action Plan Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Project Cost</b>		
<b>Estimated Action Plan Benefits</b>	<b>Estimated Project Benefit</b>		
Action Steps			

Action Step	Owner	Start Date	End Date	Status
1. Establish an executive office supported schedule for recommended leadership training with more focus on the “people” skills of management. This action step is intended to include all current and newly hired managers and supervisory personnel and will focus on up-to-date performance evaluations and face-to-face time with employees.	Grace Ramirez	September 1, 2015	September 2016	In progress and on training calendar
2. Conduct at least one all-staff meeting during each calendar year designed to be transparent and with a substantive executive agenda and goals, explaining the “why” of decisions.	Mary Lou Keenon/James Butler	September 1, 2015	April 2016	In progress
3. Develop a system of consistent and regular administrative and general updates, including e-blasts, newsletters, emails or other publications that inform.	Mary Lou Keenon/Brian Mills (monthly newsletter)	September 1, 2015	Ongoing	
4. Conduct a pulse survey to measure progress. Results of the survey will be communicated to staff via newsletter, Intranet postings, posters and staff meetings.	Mary Lou Keenon/Jennifer Ferguson	May 2, 2016	May 13, 2016	