

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			

Employee Engagement: Improving morale by creating an effective engagement infrastructure to encourage feedback, improve our workplace and our work.

Responding to Changing Demographics in the Workplace

Over the last ten years, the demographics at Minnesota Housing have changed considerably. Multiple waves of retirements caused our average employee age to decrease by ten years, from 55 to 45 years old. Our staff has grown to 240 employees and in the last two years we have hired more than 100 new employees. Coupled with an improving economy and increased competition for talented staff, we needed to be mindful about these challenges and develop creative strategies to attract and retain a strong workforce.

To accomplish this, our communications and human resources teams joined forces to build a broad employee engagement infrastructure that includes an engagement survey, mission-driven activities, cultural education, and social events.

Employee Engagement Survey

The backbone of this infrastructure is our employee engagement survey, an annual survey comprised of 46 questions in the areas of:

- Leadership
- Agency management
- Customer service
- Mission, morale and recognition
- Career path and professional development
- Workload and autonomy
- Information, communication and technology
- Management response to previous survey

Each year this valuable tool gives us important insight on what's working, what's important to our employees and what needs improvement. We launched this survey in 2011 and keep the questions comparable year-to-year, giving us a baseline to measure against and helping us respond to emerging trends.

The anonymous survey is conducted during the first two weeks of December and results are analyzed and reported back to staff in February at an all staff meeting. We provide staff with overall themes and results by division and tenure. (See **Attachment A** for a list of survey questions and **Attachment B** for Frequently Asked Questions)

To encourage participation, we provide a combination of incentives and friendly competition. The division that reaches 80% participation first and the division with the highest percentage at the end receive a free casual day. If the entire agency surpasses 80%, everyone gets an entire week of casual days. We also created a fun advertising campaign to emphasize the importance of letting your voice be heard. (**See Attachment C**). We frequently reiterate the anonymity of the survey to ensure staff feels comfortable sharing openly.

Senior leadership and management then take specific actions based on the results of the survey. For example, when we saw that communication among employees needed improvement, we created a weekly email update from the commissioner and have since seen great improvement in that category. When survey feedback showed that staff feels a strong connection to our mission, we created additional volunteer opportunities to make that connection. When feedback showed improvement could be made in how management connects with employees, we provided managers with additional training to better support their staff.

In addition to the survey, our employee engagement initiatives include ways for staff to get to know each other, have fun, and engage with our mission.

Cultural Competency Committee – This cross-agency committee was established in 2015. So far, they have hosted an impactful educational series called “Race: The Power of Illusion” and held three focus groups to collect information from staff to advance the internal cultural competency capacity. Participants engaged in hands-on, discussion-based dialogue and contributed to furthering the development of the Agency’s commitment to diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Employee Wellness Committee – Another cross-agency group, this group meets frequently to discuss and plan health and wellness opportunities for staff. Events range from training for a triathlon training to easy bike repairs to supporting employee participation in consumer supported agriculture programs. The Committee works to integrate healthy behavior into the workplace and has created new employee relationships.

Employee Appreciation Events – Every year we host an Employee Appreciation event at an off-site location. This year the event was held at our new minor league ballpark with activity stations, chair massages and drawings for gift certificates from local restaurants paid for by donations from our senior leadership team. We’ve also had employees create videos featuring interviews about what they love about working here. The video has since become a great recruitment piece and is now featured on our website. [Watch our employee video!](#)

Habitat 500 Ride – Each year a group of 10-20 employees participate in the Habitat 500 mile bike ride to raise money for Habitat affiliates across the state. The group has raised more than \$10,000 and conducts fundraising events and social activities throughout the year. The team rides 500 total miles throughout one week in sections from 20-100 miles.

Combined Charities Campaign– Individuals and groups of employees donate themed baskets for a silent auction that benefits the state’s combined charity campaign. About 100 baskets are donated each year with creative themes from all corners and levels of the agency, raising thousands of dollars for charity.

Easily Replicable

This engagement feedback loop is a good tool to gauge what’s working and what needs attention. With commitment from leadership and interest from a cross-section of employees, it is easily replicable and

has become easier to implement the longer we've done it. We now have data from multiple years to show trends, accomplishments and areas of continued improvement. It's a highly collaborative process - our communications team promotes participation, conducts the survey, analyzes results and works with the Commissioner on themes and trends for follow up. Our Human Resources department is actively involved in all aspects of employee engagement and employees from all parts of the agency serve on committees and help plan engagement events.

The collective impact of these activities has significantly improved agency operations and employee engagement in our mission and daily work. It has laid a foundation that will help us retain and attract employees for years to come.

Attachment 1: Survey questions

Leadership

1. I have confidence in the Leadership* of this organization.
2. Agency Leadership gives employees a clear picture of the direction the Agency is headed.
3. Agency Leadership shows concern for the well-being and morale of employees.
4. The Agency is headed in the right direction.

Management

5. I feel that Management* values staff.
6. Management* is responsive to staff suggestions.
7. My immediate supervisor does a good job at “managing the work” and making appropriate work assignments, setting priorities, scheduling, etc.
8. My immediate supervisor does a good job at “people management” and dealing with the people who work for him/her.
9. My immediate supervisor treats employees fairly.
10. My immediate supervisor clearly communicates what I am expected to do.
11. My immediate supervisor gives me useful feedback on how well I’m doing my job.
12. During the past 7 days, I've received positive feedback about my work.
13. During the past month, I've received positive feedback about my work.
14. I know what is expected of me at Minnesota Housing.

Customer Service & Quality Work

15. In my division, customer feedback is used to improve our work processes.
16. There is a strong emphasis on customer service in my division.
17. My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
18. People are held accountable for the quality of work they produce.
19. Employees are encouraged to be innovative and develop new and better ways of doing things.
20. I believe it is part of my job responsibility to take the initiative to improve Agency processes.

Mission, Morale and Recognition

21. Our mission makes me feel my work is important.
22. The morale on my work team is good.
23. There is a strong sense of teamwork among employees with different jobs (paraprofessionals, professionals and managers)
24. There are people to whom I can go for help when I have work-related problems.
25. My co-workers maintain a positive attitude.
26. I receive recognition that is meaningful to me.

- 27. I am satisfied working at Minnesota Housing.
- 28. I am proud to work for Minnesota Housing.
- 29. I would recommend Minnesota Housing as a great place to work.
- 30. If I observed unethical behavior at the Agency, I would be likely to report it.

Career Path & Professional Development

- 31. I have opportunities to advance my career at Minnesota Housing.
- 32. At Minnesota Housing, I am able to do what I do best.
- 33. At Minnesota Housing, Management* cares about my professional development.

Workload & Autonomy

- 34. Overall, my workload is reasonable.
- 35. The environment in this organization supports a balance between work and personal life.
- 36. I have the freedom to make necessary decisions to get my job done.

Information, Communication & Technology

- 37. I have a good understanding of the agency's business—how it works and what we do.
- 38. I have a good understanding of the Agency's strategic priorities.
- 39. I have access to necessary resources (training, technology and materials) to do my job effectively. Please describe additional resources you would find helpful to do your job more effectively.
- 40. I am well informed about relevant Agency issues.
- 41. I understand how my work fits into the goals of the Agency.
- 42. I can easily find information (documents, policies, forms, news, etc.) that I need to do my job. Please describe additional resources that would help with this.
- 43. I can easily find the right person to go to with a work question. Please describe additional resources that would help with this.

2014 Survey Follow-Up

- 44. I was given an opportunity to see/hear about the 2014 employee survey results. Please choose N/A if you were not employed by the Agency at that time.
- 45. I was given the opportunity to discuss my ideas about the results of the 2014 employee survey. Please choose N/A if you were not employed by the Agency at that time.
- 46. Agency leadership has taken action based on the feedback received from the 2014 employee survey. Please choose N/A if you were not here then.



2015 Minnesota Housing Employee Engagement Survey

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the survey voluntary?

Yes, of course. However, we're encouraging employees to participate and therefore we're providing a few incentives to meet and exceed our previous response rate. Employee feedback is critical to help make informed decisions that will make Minnesota Housing a better place to work.

Is the survey anonymous?

Yes! The only thing our survey tool (Cvent) collects is your IP address to identify you, and all of us in the Agency have the same IP address because we are in the same network.

Some have asked if we can see who opens or clicks a link in an email. When we send through our eNews tool (Emma), we can track that, but we will only send the link to the survey through Outlook this year, and we have no way of knowing who opens or clicks through any email in Outlook.

There is the opportunity to submit comments, so please do not include any personal information in the optional comment area that may identify you. If you include identifying information it will be redacted and will not be included in survey summary results so that we can ensure anonymity.

How can you keep the survey anonymous AND tell if a division has reached a certain percent response rate?

To keep the survey anonymous, participation rates will be based on number of employees and contractors in each division compared to number of employees who answer question #1 regarding the division in which you work. We will be able to report how many, not which employees have completed the survey.

Who will see the results?

The following staff will be involved with data review, analyzing and summarizing trends:

1. Kristi Steinmann (Communications Team)—only staff person with access to full data. All survey respondents are anonymous and are given a response number, but data will never be pulled by respondent (both due to privacy and the fact that it's not very helpful information). Kristi will pull data and give aggregate data to other reviewers. Reports will be pulled by division or length of service, **never both**.
2. Tom O'Hern (General Counsel)—will review full comments and redact statements that may identify the responder before they are provided to other reviewers, and will also review aggregate summary data.
3. Commissioner Mary Tingerthal and Senior Leadership Team members — will review aggregate summary data and full comments after any identifying statements have been redacted.
4. All employees – will see aggregate summary data and trend reports.
5. Minnesota Housing Board—will see aggregate summary data and trend reports. Board members may see the redacted version of comments if they make a formal request.

Can contractors complete the survey?

YES! We want feedback from everyone who works at Minnesota Housing. This includes contractors.

When will staff see survey results?

The survey will remain open December 1 through December 18. After that time, results will be analyzed and summary results will be shared at an all-staff meeting in early 2016.

What will be done with the results after they are released?

Senior leaders will determine next steps based on feedback received.

How do you define employee engagement?

For purposes of this survey, Minnesota Housing defines employee engagement as the combined level of commitment to job, organization and mission, as a result of internal and external motivating factors, including work environment, relationships, career goals and compensation.



Have you heard?

The employee engagement survey is all the rage right now!

Visit the intranet
for the survey link.
Your voice matters!

December 1
THROUGH
December 18



My job is swell!

**But I really wish we could get some
new technology around here...**

**Share your feedback
in the employee
engagement survey!**

**December 1
THROUGH
December 18**



I'm calling all my co-workers...

To tell them to take the employee engagement survey!



We want **your** input!
Visit the intranet for
the survey link.

December **1**
THROUGH
December **18**



Why the dirty look?

You're standing between me and a week of casual day stickers..take the survey!

Help us reach **90%** participation - take the engagement survey!

December **1**
THROUGH
December **18**



What's wrong with me, doc?

It seems that you've lost your voice because you haven't taken the engagement survey!

Visit the intranet
for the survey link.
Your voice matters!

December 1
THROUGH
December 18



Tired of typing in mittens?

Share your thoughts on our facilities - new questions included this year!

Visit the intranet
for the survey link.
Your voice matters!

December 1
THROUGH
December 18