

2014 Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

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

Entry Name _____

HFA _____

Submission Contact _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Qualified Entries must be received by **Tuesday, July 1, 2014.**

For more information about Qualified Entries, [click here to access the 2014 Entry Rules.](#)

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

HFA _____

Entry Name _____

| Communications | Homeownership | Rental Housing | Special Needs Housing |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Report <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Empowering New Buyers <input type="checkbox"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Multifamily Management <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Combating Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs |
| Legislative Advocacy | Management Innovation | Special Achievement | Are you providing visual aids? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

Communications – Annual Report

MassHousing Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2013

“Know your audience” is a key communications maxim and a critical one when it comes time to producing an annual report, especially for a public agency.

In Massachusetts, the audiences that often scrutinize the annual reports of quasi-public agencies like MassHousing most closely – legislators, other government officials, government watchdogs and the media – are on the lookout for reports that hint at extravagance, self-aggrandizement and frivolousness. This has been the case to a high degree since the financial crisis began in 2008, and understandably so, given the stress and strain on the economy and the need for prudence in government spending. It has been compounded by periodic negative news stories about spending at quasi-governmental agencies and also by a special commission established by the governor in Massachusetts which drew unprecedented scrutiny to these agencies in the last five years and led to new laws around transparency.

As a result, it is imperative that MassHousing present itself in an annual report as a capable, competent agency that is delivering affordable housing consistent with its mission. Equally important is that the report portrays an agency that is serious-minded, professional and focused. This does not mean the annual report must be boring. On the contrary, the Agency strives to make the report interesting and readable. However the environment in which the Agency works precludes it from publishing reports with design elements that might distract from its public mission. MassHousing is compelled to steer clear of playful themes, elaborate designs and other elements that might be deemed superfluous in the eyes of the audience.

It is within this context that MassHousing hopes the report will be judged.

Fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013) was the best lending year in MassHousing’s 47-year history. As such, the overarching goal of the Annual Report was to showcase the Agency’s record lending year, highlight its collaboration with the private sector, put forth testimonials from residents whom the Agency serves and draw attention to the quantity, quality and variety of housing that MassHousing finances.

In 2013, MassHousing also published a five-year strategic plan that challenged it to be more transparent, more customer- and business-partner friendly, and more proactive in its efforts to promote products, programs and activities. The Agency wanted to incorporate the mandate and spirit of the strategic plan into the annual report as well.

The objectives were to:

- Highlight the record lending year;
- Convey an image of a high-functioning, successful, self-sustaining public agency;
- Acknowledge key business partners and showcase their role in the Agency’s success;
- Humanize the Agency’s work by profiling people who had been served;

- Highlight the large volume of affordable rental housing that has been financed;
- Be easy to read and easy on the eye; and perhaps as importantly as any of these factors,
- Be easy to distribute widely at a minimal cost.

In order to meet its objectives MassHousing set out to:

- Make it clear early in the report that it had a record lending year;
- Use customer and business partner quotes to endorse the success and business model;
- Add gravitas to the report by including a message from Governor Deval Patrick;
- Be authentic by avoiding any stock photography;
- Take high-quality professional photos of business partners, customers and real estate;
- Take professional photos of every apartment community that was financed;
- Utilize a clean design, simple fonts and ample whitespace;
- Augment the stories through large, bold and compelling photos;
- Provide fiscal year highlights in an interesting, colorful and eye-catching manner;
- Draw the reader's attention to quotes from business partners and customers;
- Minimize costs by writing, editing and designing the report in-house;
- Broaden the reach of the report by publishing it online.

The goals were achieved by:

- Referring prominently to the record year on the report's front cover;
- Communicating a large amount of data and background in order to be transparent;
- Including customer and business partner quotes in bold, yellow text boxes;
- Featuring a message and photo of Governor Deval Patrick on the inside cover;
- Using original, high-quality, bold and professional photography;
- Using photos of both people and real estate;
- Producing a report with a minimum of visual clutter;
- Breaking up bullet point data and supplementing points with occasional illustrations;
- Writing, designing and editing the report using MassHousing staff;
- Publishing the report online using free publishing software from www.youblisher.com;
- Sharing the report via social media with links to the online version of the report.

MassHousing was honored to receive a "Silver Bell Award" from the Publicity Club of New England at their annual Bell Ringer Awards ceremony on June 9, 2014 for its Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report.

The fiscal year 2013 MassHousing Annual Report reveals a housing finance agency at its very best: Carrying out its public mission in a cost effective way, partnering with the private sector, housing its low- and moderate-income citizens with dignity and respect and building and preserving housing that will be a long-term asset to the cities and towns of the Commonwealth.

VISUAL AID

The electronic version of MassHousing's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2013 is available at:

<http://www.youblisher.com/p/832778-2013-MassHousing-Annual-Report/>