

NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015

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 Matt Cunningham at mcunningham@ncsha.org or 202-624-5424.

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
Communications - Annual Report
MassHousing's 2014 Annual Report

Overview.

In 2013 MassHousing began the process of developing a new strategic plan that was finalized and implemented in 2014. The FY 2014 Annual Report is very much a reflection of both the objectives and attitude of this plan.

The Strategic Plan set priorities and goals for all aspects of MassHousing's business and operations in five main areas:

- to preserve and expand the supply of affordable rental housing;
- to expand sustainable homeownership opportunities;
- to increase MassHousing's transparency and accountability;
- to strengthen the Agency's organizational capacity, and;
- to broaden and strengthen partnerships.

It was created following interviews with 200 MassHousing business partners and customers; a review of the products and programs of the Agency and similar organizations across Massachusetts and around the country; and a public comment period. In all, over 200 action items were developed as a result of this report.

This was a massive undertaking both in its depth and its breadth so it was critically important that the Annual Report set out to capture the energy of this endeavor while at the same time documenting in a compelling way, the accomplishments of this important time.

Audience and objective ... an opportunity.

MassHousing's Annual Report is an opportunity to catalogue and communicate the HFAs current position, climate and accomplishments to its partners – both non-profit and for-profit – stakeholders, policy makers, government officials and the people it serves.

MassHousing's approach. Show it all.

Through the Strategic Plan, MassHousing is working to increase transparency and accountability, and because of this it was determined that a larger book would be the best approach. With transparency and accountability in mind, it is better to over-share than to under-share. Substantial sections for all of MassHousing's divisions and departments were included, as well as every Rental Lending loan that closed within the fiscal year, each with its own write-up; an in-depth Executive Director and Chairman's Letter; a blurb about and a link to the Strategic Plan; historical charts; and community outreach efforts.

It was also the intention of the Annual Report to heavily emphasize partnerships in this report. Without its partners, MassHousing's work would not get done. They are valued and acknowledging this deepens the partnerships and encourages new activity.

The inclusive content also described and pictured many Agency staff members. By showing the friendly, professional staff who perform the work every day, MassHousing emerges as a more approachable and receptive organization.

The most compelling part of the report is always the images and stories of the people served, and MassHousing is as proud and honored to tell these stories this year as it is every year.

Inspiration. It's relevant.

The cover of the annual report is a "word cloud" that was recently created to represent the Agency's aspirations as articulated by the Strategic Plan. Prior to the publication of the Annual Report in 2014, a large version of this graphic was installed in the lobby of MassHousing's office in Boston to make a statement to both visitors and staff regarding these important aspirations. This "word cloud" establishes who MassHousing is – what drives us – what defines us – and what inspires us. The creation of the "word cloud" on the wall at MassHousing was met with a great deal of enthusiasm from Agency staff. As such, Executive staff wanted a way to give a copy of this word cloud to each employee without the extra cost of creating an item just for that purpose. The idea for the cover – and subsequently for the framework of the report – is one that has proven to be quite compelling.

With this list of words and phrases from the graphic – *Mission Driven, Results Oriented, Responsive, Customer Focused, Forward Thinking, Collaborative, Good Listeners, Problem Solvers, Constantly Improving, Fair and Inclusive, Financially Strong* – attention is drawn to the story or section that would be a perfect example of how the Agency is working to achieve the highlighted concept.

Visual impact: Energy and substance.

Visually, MassHousing wanted something strong and energetic. This was achieved through color, graphic elements, bold headings and vivid, authentic, photography; nothing was used without purpose. The size and content of the report give it substance. Going with a large printed piece in an age where everything is digital makes this report stand out.

Strategy: You want to keep it.

A printed report has many uses, including distribution at meetings, use as an 'overview' and presence in the main lobby. When a book looks and feels good, people want to have it, keep it at their desk, flip through it and reference it. For MassHousing, it is a permanent record to have for years to come.

To enlarge the Agency's reach, the Annual Report was published online with the use of free digital publishing software called Youblisher. It was posted on MassHousing's websites both internal and external, promoted in the e-newsletter and on all of the social media channels (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn).

Results. They have good things to say.

While it is hard to quantify the results of an annual report, MassHousing's was well received. Positive feedback was received in the form of "Tweets" (for example, business partners tweeted and posted on FaceBook with links to their features in the report) and emails from partners and industry peers, as well as verbal feedback. One email from an industry partner said "... your most recent annual report is stunning. The color choice, the word cloud, the layout, the photographs – all are amazing. And, that you've installed a graphic of the word cloud in your office lobby is brilliant!" The staff is pleased with the final product and continue to distribute them as needed and when relevant.

Cost: DIY and multiple uses.

MassHousing's report was written, proofread and designed in-house, including the wall art that inspired the cover and title concept. This saved a lot of money; by distributing the wall art to staff via annual report (as opposed to a desk tchotchke, for example) money was also saved. For printing, a very thorough procurement and bidding process with four different vendors was performed; because of this, the best price possible was received for what the Agency wanted.

The photography procured through this project has many other uses other than the Annual Report, including website, advertising and presentations; it will be used and re-used throughout the year and for years to come.

Conclusion.

An Annual Report is an Agency's story. It conveys so much about what the Agency represents just by its cover. With the cover design this year – MassHousing felt strongly that the energy that everyone at the Agency feels about the strategic plan and new opportunities is conveyed clearly and in a very meaningful way.



COLLABORATIVE
team players **PROBLEM SOLVERS** *Responsive*
results oriented **MISSION DRIVEN** *Nimble*
constantly improving **SERVICE ORIENTED** *inclusive*
Customer Focused *Valued Partner* **Engaged** *fair*
Good Listeners **Consistent and Reliable** *leader of choice*
Financially Strong **FORWARD THINKING**
Highly Competent



EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT... *because anybody can serve.* - Martin Luther King **You must do the thing YOU THINK you cannot do.** - Eleanor Roosevelt *The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.* - Mahatma Gandhi *There's no place like home.* - Dorothy **Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever ACHIEVE GREATLY.** - Robert Kennedy



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