



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Housing Impacts: 2016 Promotional Suite

North Carolina lawmakers and elected officials want to see a measurable return on investment from projects financed by the NC Housing Finance Agency. Specifically, they want proof that state investments benefit North Carolina's citizens, communities and local and state economies. They also want to see that we are leveraging these dollars with private and other public funds to maximize the state's ROI.

Enter *Housing Impacts*, our suite of promotional materials showcasing the Agency's annual accomplishments:

Housing Impacts: 2016 Report on Achievements—This annual document offers a compelling look at how the Agency's housing investments benefit individuals, families, veterans, seniors and people with disabilities while serving as an economic driver for the state and its workers.

Program Impact Reports—Designed to complement the broader overview of the *Report on Achievements*, these four reports show the impact of the Agency's programs on Home Ownership, Rental Housing, Supportive Housing and Rehabilitation and Repair and share pertinent research to support the need for continued investment in these areas.

Housing Trust Fund: 30 Years of Results!—This document showcases how we leverage the state's only funding source for affordable housing by drawing in additional resources to maximize results and fill housing gaps for the state's most vulnerable citizens.

With a simple but engaging, easy-to-read design, photos of actual properties and real residents, and hard-hitting infographics, this suite of materials is tailored to meet lawmakers' need to quickly understand the value of their housing appropriations. Though brief, the format provides an impactful message: the housing financed by the NC Housing Finance Agency is getting results for North Carolina!

Developing Our Message for a Soundbite World

To accentuate how the Agency's programs get results for North Carolina, we centered the message of the suite's keystone, the *Report on Achievements*, around three specific areas: Impacting North Carolina's Economy, Impacting Communities and Impacting North Carolinians. We then carried those three themes throughout the rest of the suite, showing the impacts of investments on specific types of housing and how the state's main funding source enhances lives, communities and the economy.

Each printed piece tells the same story but from different angles and with different elements that work together. Because our current legislature has long been focused on jobs and economic development, those are the lynchpins of our message. Woven throughout the suite is the idea that affordable housing investments support jobs, generate tax revenue and boost sagging local economies with community revitalization. While our numbers speak to the vast number of North Carolinians we've helped, it is the economic impact of our work—the “dollars and sense”—that resonates with our target audience.

Packaging Our Message to Inspire Action

Our audience is bombarded with daily messages and pleas from diverse groups with conflicting interests and requests, so we needed our message to stand out. The advent of social media as well as smartphones has dramatically reduced the amount of time that audiences spend reading pages and digesting content. Infographics have become a preferred way to communicate, allowing complex information to be simplified for quick understanding.

So, while many agencies and corporations are providing lengthier reports, we chose instead a more easily digestible method that can be effortlessly read. The *Housing Impacts* suite uses eye-catching icons to showcase our Agency's return on investment as well as a color palette that conveys action and energy. We also have excluded financials, available on our website, in favor of the top-level production numbers and case studies that best illustrate our accomplishments, as well as the faces of those directly impacted by Agency investments.

Our photos of real properties and real families and individuals meet a two-fold goal: providing our audience with faces to go with the numbers and showing real-world examples to lawmakers of how their investments translate into homes for their constituents and economic gains for their communities.

This supports a subtle call-to-action that is consistent throughout the suite: Continue and increase funding dollars for affordable housing to improve your communities and constituents' lives. However, there is no specific "ask" in these documents—the ask is made by staff and board members after lawmakers have reviewed the information. In addition to weaving results of funding throughout the suite, we include a section in the *Housing Trust Fund* that shows what appropriations of \$15 million, \$20 million and \$25 million would produce for units, jobs, taxes and real estate value.

Printed documents are preferred by our audience who with a quick glance can see not just the monetary returns on Agency investments, but the impact of our work on the citizens of North Carolina. It provides us with a hook for a personal conversation with decision-makers to point out properties and achievements and allow them to have a personal connection with our work. When visiting lawmakers, our staff hands them the suite, a stark contrast to the vast influx in emails that they receive daily. Our method is hard to ignore, as are our results.

We also make the suite available electronically so it can be highlighted on our social media platforms and shared by partners and other stakeholders in the affordable housing industry. To keep our accomplishments top of mind all year with lawmakers, partners, the media and the general public, we share the infographics and quick snippets of information as posts several times each month.

Delivering Our Message to Get Results

The entire production of the *Housing Impacts* suite, from professional photography to graphic design and printing, costs less than \$15,000, an investment that can provide big returns by making a strong case for the continued funding of affordable housing programs. This collection of materials has also strengthened our relationship with our elected officials and positioned our Agency as a successful, can-do organization that maximizes North Carolina's affordable housing investments for people, communities and the economy.

As a result, while funding has been cut for other state programs—or even eliminated altogether—our Agency has been able to continually secure state dollars. This is in no small part due to the *Housing Impacts* suite, judging by the reaction of members of the General Assembly. For example:

“The design allows us to quickly see the profound impact that Agency programs have on our communities and constituents. It illustrates a significant return on the state’s investment.”

House Majority Leader John Bell

Another benefit has been the strengthening of our brand. Because these pieces require collaboration across departments and business groups, new partnerships across business groups have formed that has allowed us to better share our message with all audiences, enhancing our brand and leading to other innovative communications.

Our *Housing Impacts* suite of materials not only shows the impact that our programs have on the citizens, economy and workforce of North Carolina, but also positions the Agency as a credible, financially responsible expert in the affordable housing industry. With these materials, we can demonstrate in a concrete way that our Agency gets results for North Carolina, urge our lawmakers and stakeholders to continue to support the Agency and its programs and secure the funding needed to reach more citizens and communities across North Carolina.