



2013 Annual Awards Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

Entry Name Nebraska Dashboard

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

HFA Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Submission Contact Steve Peregrine

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Entry form with description, check(s), and visual aids (optional) must be received by NCSHA by **Monday, July 1, 2013**.

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

HFA Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

Entry Name Nebraska Dashboard

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
<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"/> Federal Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES (link to Nebraska Dashboard) <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Category: Special Achievement

"If you want to know your past - look into your present conditions. If you want to know your future - look into your present actions."

-- Buddhist Saying

Response to Need

Nebraska communities often come to NIFA seeking solutions for housing challenges or for financial resources for various programs (“actions”) without an in depth understanding of their existing housing metrics (“conditions”). We all know that taking steps to address a problem you think you have, rather than solving a problem you may not know you have, does not bode well for solving a housing crisis. The key for a community to address its housing needs is to understand their current situation – and that means access to good, current data.

For a number of years, NIFA has assisted Nebraska communities in addressing their housing needs through the engagement of a research firm for the production of the annual *Profile of Nebraska* report. Soon after the 2013 report was made available, NIFA took this availability of data to a new and higher level. With the roll out of the Nebraska Dashboard, NIFA now provides communities with an even greater ability to make use of *Profile of Nebraska* data. The Nebraska Dashboard, a web-based interface, allows users to access not only information in the current *Profile of Nebraska*, but also historical data from ten prior years of *Profile of Nebraska* reports.

The *Profile of Nebraska* report provides current, high-quality, relevant data about factors influencing the development, production, use, and need for housing in individual communities throughout the state. Each year, at NIFA’s annual housing conference, an updated draft of this report is released. A specific session is offered at the conference where the consultant engaged by NIFA to prepare the report highlights significant changes, new issues, and notable trends gleaned from the data gathering process. The report is provided by USB flash drive to all conference attendees. Each annual report is then posted on the NIFA website in draft form with a request for comments. After several weeks and the consideration of comments, the final *Profile of Nebraska* is released to the public.

The *Profile of Nebraska* is made up of three volumes. Volume I contains information on the state as a whole, together with information on each of nine sub-regions. These sub-regions are consistent with the sub-regions established by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development with respect to the administration and evaluation of housing, community, and economic development activities and the allocation of funding resources. Volume II represents a county-by-county analysis, identifying pertinent statistics for all of Nebraska’s 93 counties. Volume III examines cities in the state and provides a summary analysis of demographic, economic and housing statistics, as well as population, rental vacancy data and housing production and cost information.

The current *Profile of Nebraska* contains over 1,400 pages of data, tables, graphs and narrative. With a *Profile of Nebraska* for each of the last ten years, there has been compiled an excellent resource of both historic and current information for specific regions, counties and communities. While an excellent tool for some, it does take time and commitment to peruse all three volumes of the *Profile* in order to extract specific data.

Innovation

While the *Profile of Nebraska* is used by many in connection with community development, in particular to address the need for affordable housing, the amount of data could, for some, be a bit overwhelming. To improve this valuable resource and to enhance its access, ease of use and overall effectiveness, NIFA and its consultant embarked on an innovative idea.

In early 2013, NIFA released a web-based, interactive, analytical and comparative tool to the *Profile of Nebraska*. The Nebraska Dashboard is now the interactive companion to the *Profile of Nebraska*. The [Nebraska Dashboard](#) allows the user to quickly navigate by geographic location (region, county, city) to specific key data with the added capability to compare exact data points side by side to other geographic locations (regions, county, city). This comparison tool is also available for data on a statewide basis among the various demographic, economic and housing related statistics contained in the *Profile of Nebraska*. Navigational tools and the Dashboard controls allow the user to define the search so that the data tables and comparative graphs appear for all years covered by the ten years of *Profile of Nebraska*. An added feature is the ability to print the graphs and/or export/download to various formats enabling the insertion into documents created by the user.

Hanna:Keelan utilizes the information available with the Nebraska Profile Dashboard for all our Nebraska Community and County housing studies, comprehensive plans and redevelopment planning programs. The Dashboard is a user friendly research tool, containing data that mixes well with other quantitative and qualitative information, to produce successful planning projects.

Tim M. Keelan, Community & Regional Planner, Hanna:Keelan Associates, PC

Achieving Results

Since its launch on April 23, 2013, according to Google Analytics, the Nebraska Dashboard has been accessed 548 times with 109 return users. While users primarily reside in Nebraska, nearly 30% are from other states.

In its relative short time in operation, the Nebraska Dashboard has become a useful tool for both the public and private sector seeking to compile current and relevant information on Nebraska's housing stock and potential need for affordable housing. NIFA regularly hears from users who have accessed the Nebraska Dashboard.

I just wanted to let you know that I am very impressed with your dashboard. It is easy to use and contains a lot of information. The ability to drill down to the profile report for an area from the dashboard is a good idea. I have shared this site with the rest of my staff as a resource for several types of data that can help them do their jobs.

Phillip A. Baker, Labor Market Information Director, [Nebraska Department of Labor](#)

Benefits vs. Costs

NIFA's mission is broad and includes encouraging the development and provision of decent, safe and affordable housing. To carry out this mission, NIFA routinely invests and leverages its unrestricted resources in various initiatives and programs. The *Profile of Nebraska* and the Nebraska Dashboard, while funded by NIFA resources, provides necessary information to affordable housing developers and communities working to address their housing needs. This encourages the investment of private capital in the Nebraska housing market, while also stimulating economic

growth, job creation and the production of decent, safe and affordable housing “where jobs go to sleep at night.”

The initial preparation cost for the Nebraska Dashboard was \$14,800 with the estimated 2014 upgrades and maintenance cost to be \$8,960. The *Profile of Nebraska* with its extensive research, data collection and telephone survey work for the rental vacancy data has an estimated cost for 2014 of \$100,000.

The cost to NIFA of the *Profile of Nebraska* and the Nebraska Dashboard is far outweighed by the benefits to Nebraska communities facing housing challenges. These tools provide those communities and others ready access to data that describes and documents their present housing conditions enabling them to make better informed decisions and take actions to positively impact their future.

Link to the [Nebraska Dashboard](#)