



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

Entry Name New Jersey Housing Resource Center

Fill out the entry name <i>exactly</i> as you want it listed in the awards program.

HFA New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

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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 New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

Entry Name New Jersey Housing Resource Center

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 <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Background

The New Jersey Housing Resource Center (NJHRC), administered by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), is a searchable, interactive online database of affordable and accessible housing units available throughout New Jersey. The NJHRC, accessible at www.njhrc.gov, is free to users seeking housing, as well as landlords and property owners who can post available units. Since the website's inception in 2005, the NJHRC has won the prestigious Council of State Government Innovations Award, and has helped tens of thousands of individuals and families find safe and affordable housing in the state. Prior to the NJHRC, New Jersey's high demand and low supply of affordable housing meant that low- to moderate-income and disabled persons were left with few options. Either they were completely on their own or were reliant on the state to find appropriate living arrangements.

Recognizing the need for a more efficient system for all residents to navigate the housing market, the NJHMFA partnered with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), and the New Jersey Department of Human Services - Division of Disability Services (DHS-DDS) to develop NJHRC. The agencies contracted with Social Serve, a national provider of housing location services, to maintain the NJHRC website and operate a toll-free call center to assist consumers without access to a computer. Social Serve is a nonprofit organization with a mission to maximize community access to housing information. The NJHRC website enables residents to search for housing according to their needs without revealing any personal information or conducting any "cold calls" or visits; an arduous task for people with special needs or without easy access to public transportation or a car.

Objective

The NJHRC addresses a multitude of housing needs across the continuum, from homelessness to homeownership, special needs housing to disaster relocation, and much more through a web-based tool that is innovative in its effectiveness, thoroughness, ease of use and efficiency. No other housing resource offers this magnitude of data management and human interaction.

The NJHRC is designed with the user in mind, to maximize accessibility and increase the user's ability to conduct detailed customized searches, currently not offered by any other search engine in the state. The site is multi-faceted, offering service in seventy-two languages online, as well as offering services in Spanish and English via the toll-free phone number and email. User accessibility is further increased by making it 100% free to list and search for properties and resources on the site. The NJHRC offers 30 general and advanced search fields, such as whether a credit check is required, as well as 24 specialized accessibility/disability search options like features including ramped entryways or elevators. The site features a median income calculator and rent affordability tools that help renters locate properties that they can afford. Furthermore, search results can be displayed on a map, and a proximity search locates properties within a selected distance from desired locations, such as work, school, or even a family member's house.

The NJHRC offers a housing search for special populations that provides additional customized search options. This search option provides landlords with a way to privately promote their properties to a variety of special needs groups, such as veterans, seniors, and physically disabled individuals. By giving landlords a free and unique way to market housing to targeted populations, this secure service also increases mixed housing options for special needs clients. In addition, state-authorized agencies can search for housing that meets client needs without sacrificing privacy or confidentiality.

Critical Tool During Superstorm Sandy

The NJHRC proved to be especially critical for displaced residents to search for and locate affordable and accessible housing units in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy that struck New Jersey on October 29, 2012. Superstorm Sandy inflicted major or severe physical damage on approximately 40,500 owners' primary residences and over 15,600 renter-occupied homes. The storm's impact on low- and moderate-

income (LMI) households in the state was particularly pronounced. Among those who applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Individual Assistance, nearly half or about 30,000 households were of low- to moderate-income. Seventy-four percent of renters or 11,582 households that reported damage to their homes were of low- to moderate-income. The storm also left households with special needs especially vulnerable by damaging or displacing support networks, creating accessibility issues and increasing the costs of living. Special needs populations displaced by Superstorm Sandy have included adults, children, and youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have intellectual or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, or behavioral health needs.

In response to the severe need for housing post-Sandy, NJHMFA increased its investment in the NJHRC to ensure that any available units in the State of New Jersey were listed, particularly focusing on properties within the nine hardest hit counties. The Agency signed an addendum to its original contract with Social Serve, which has extensive experience with aiding the housing search for states experiencing the effects of natural disasters, to provide NJHRC with the ability to act quickly and efficiently during the tumultuous time. Enhanced services have included conducting phone research and direct outreach to inform property providers of the housing need in order to secure new listings of available units for the database, providing constant updating of available units and removal of filled units, and working closely with FEMA staff. Specifically, Social Serve exported all viable listings from FEMA's National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS) to the NJHRC site, allowing for one designated portal for available units. In addition, Social Serve shared information with the FEMA field offices and Disaster Relief Centers for their direct use, and referred FEMA inquiries to the NJHRC call center for housing search assistance.

On November 3, 2012, FEMA activated the Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) Program allowing eligible households displaced by the storm and living in shelters to stay in participating hotels. At the request of the Christie Administration, FEMA approved multiple extensions to the TSA program to help displaced Sandy survivors remain in hotels as FEMA, the State of New Jersey and local partners worked to identify longer-term housing solutions. FEMA staff and relief workers used the NJHRC site every day to help Sandy survivors locate more permanent housing beyond the TSA Program's temporary assistance. More recently, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) hosted two rental housing fairs for Sandy-displaced families, during which the NJHMFA showed attendees how to use the NJHRC site to locate affordable housing. The Atlantic County Rental Fair served nearly 250 families on May 17, 2013, and the Ocean County Rental Fair served 145 families on April 6, 2013.

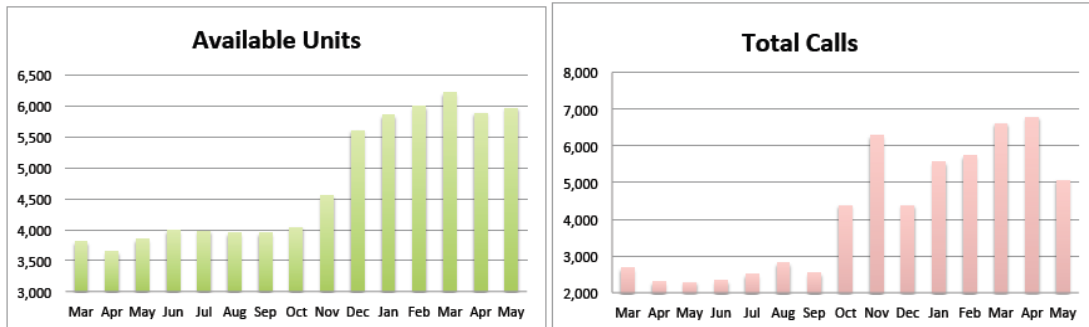
Superstorm Sandy also had a significant impact on housing that is subsidized by both the state and federal governments, which includes public housing as well as housing financed primarily for older adults and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) recipients. According to preliminary estimates from February 2013, approximately 2,188 federally subsidized units in 192 multi-family properties and 824 public housing units were damaged in the storm. The NJHRC site provided public housing authorities with vacancy listing management for voucher programs in a highly efficient, time-saving manner. It also allowed property owners to post unit listings with indications of subsidies such as Housing Choice Vouchers and income-based options. In turn, housing counselors and individuals were able to search listings for units that met specific needs and voucher specifications.

The NJHRC Call Center

The staff at the NJHRC Call Center is warm, professional, and truly unique. The phone representatives are compassionate and highly trained to handle calls for all types of assistance, from general intake, accessibility questions, to emergency evacuation advice. Unlike many call centers, the NJHRC Call Center does not have time limits on calls and can spend as much time as needed to assist residents with locating available housing opportunities. The breadth of the call center assistance made the NJHRC an invaluable tool post-Sandy.

Results

The efforts of the NJHRC Call Center and the website combined resulted in an increase of 55% more listed available units. In May 2012, pre-Sandy, 3,846 available units were listed per month, and post-Sandy, the number increased to 5,966 available units listed per month. Efforts to maintain a comprehensive list of available units became even more imperative after the storm as the demand for affordable housing units increased exponentially. Thanks to three contract extensions from NJHMFA, Social Serve was able to more than double the number of calls made per month to landlords, growing from an average of 2,700 calls per month pre-Sandy to an average of 5,800 per month post-Sandy.



Furthermore, Social Serve's continued outreach efforts and calls to landlords ensured that these numbers were as up-to-date and accurate as possible. The NJHRC's user-friendly interface and accurate data became so popular that FEMA decided to use the NJHRC housing registry as the official list of available affordable housing for the State of New Jersey. As a result of these efforts, 23,000 of the NJHRC's listed units throughout the state were rented in 2012; 14,000 of these units have been rented since Superstorm Sandy.

How the HRC responds to the judging criteria:

Innovative:

The NJHRC site maximizes housing options for all New Jersey residents, especially the low- to moderate-income and disabled, by enabling them to perform detailed housing searches using 21 accessibility search criteria, 90 property-defining criteria, and assists them in finding housing based on Median Family Income (MFI) without leaving home. Consumers can also conduct side-by-side comparisons of housing units, and utilize the site's mapping feature to see a birds-eye view of all available units in a given area. The NJHRC is the only comprehensive search engine for affordable housing in the state.

Respond to an important state need:

As various federal programs like the TSA administered by FEMA are expiring, New Jersey's Sandy survivors who remain displaced will need to continue utilizing a resource like NJHRC to secure more permanent housing in the weeks and months ahead.

Achieve intended results:

The NJHRC has not only helped individuals and families find safe and affordable housing in the state, but also served as an opportunity for separate and distinct government agencies to collaborate and share resources and information effectively with the public.

Provide benefits that outweigh costs:

The benefits of the NJHRC are invaluable and vastly outweigh the Agency's cost of maintaining the service. Aside from offering a constant stream of current housing information and support for residents, the NJHRC provides vital housing information for disaster preparedness, a benefit for all housing agencies across the state, and a bank of up-to-date housing data that can assist policy makers with program and resource related decisions.

New Jersey HOUSING Resource Center

1-877-428-8844

"NJHRC, Where Everyone Can Find a Home"

www.njhrc.gov

WERE YOU AFFECTED BY HURRICANE SANDY?

CLICK HERE TO SEARCH FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING DUE TO HURRICANE SANDY

Español

NJHRC provides an online tool for:

- Finding and listing affordable housing
- Helping people with disabilities find housing options
- Obtaining housing information and links

It's FREE and anonymous!

Vacancy information is updated continuously!

Find Housing

Add Housing

WELCOME

Information for...

Consumers

Property Owners

Agencies

What's New

HURRICANE SANDY RECOVERY RESOURCES

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION RESOURCES

GENERALIDADES SOBRE EJECUCIONES HIPOTECARIAS

Contact Us | Privacy Notice | Legal Statement & Disclaimer | Accessibility Statement

The NJHRC is a partnership of:



[Department of Community Affairs](#)



[Department of Human Services - Division of Disability Services](#)
Funding provided by the Real Choice Systems Change grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at USDHHS.



[Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency](#)

Powered by: [socialserve.com](#)

Top: NJHRC website homepage.



[Login](#) | [English](#) | [Español](#) | [Select Language](#) |

[Housing Search: Atlantic City, NJ](#)

[Choose a different city](#)

Basic	Advanced	Accessible	
General Search Information			
Do you have a Section 8 Voucher? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No ^[?]			
VASH Voucher Holder? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No ^[?]			
Bedroom[s]	Any	Bath	Any
Rent range	\$0 to \$1,300 a month		
Optional Filters			
ZIP Code[s]	Optional ZIP Code[s] List relevant ZIP codes		
Public Transit	Not Applicable		
Shopping	Not Applicable		
Hospital	Not Applicable		
Smoking Policy ^[?]	Any		
Senior Housing	Include in Results		
Landlord Speaks	English		
Search by Distance			
Within	N/A Miles of		
Entry and Door Options			
See all No-Step/Flat/Ramped Entry			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessible Parking Close to Unit			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat or No-Step Entry and/or			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ramped Entry			
<input type="checkbox"/> Doorways - 32" or wider			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accessible Elevators			
<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Entry Door			
<input type="checkbox"/> Lever Style Door Handles			
<input type="checkbox"/> Unit on First Floor			
Kitchen Options			
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Counter[s]			
<input type="checkbox"/> Front Controls on Stove/Cook-top			
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimum 27" Knee Space Under Kitchen Counter			
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-digital Kitchen Appliances			
Bathroom Options			
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Vanity			
<input type="checkbox"/> T Turn or 60" Turning Circle in Bathrooms			
<input type="checkbox"/> Grab Bars			
<input type="checkbox"/> Lowered Toilet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimum 27" Knee Space Under Vanities			
<input type="checkbox"/> Raised Toilet			
<input type="checkbox"/> Reinforced for Grab Bar			
<input type="checkbox"/> Roll-in Shower			



Top: NJHRC website showing various search criteria.
Bottom: NJHMFA employee helps attendee navigate the NJHRC website at a rental housing fair.

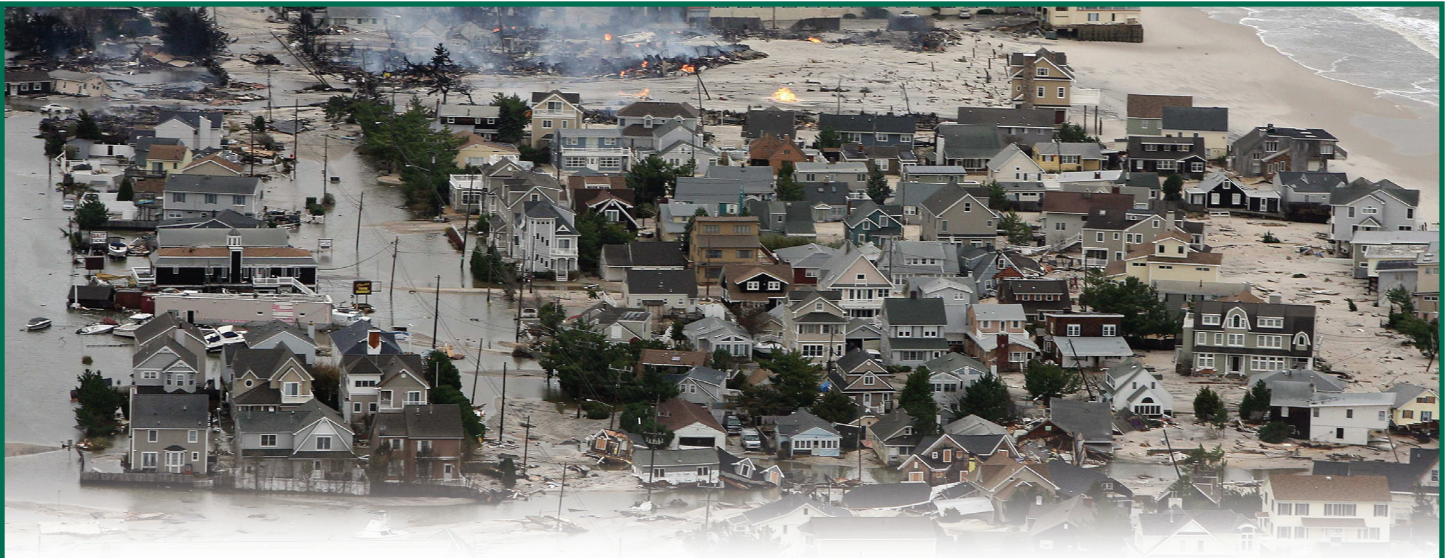
HFA: New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

Entry Name: New Jersey Housing Resource Center

Attachment 1: HRC flyer that was distributed to attendees at rental housing fairs

Attachment 2: Double-sided HRC consumer rack card

Attachment 3: Double-sided HRC property manager rack card



HAVE YOU BEEN DISPLACED DUE TO HURRICANE SANDY?

THE NEW JERSEY HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER IS HERE TO HELP.

Disaster housing assistance is now available through the New Jersey Housing Resource Center at NJHRC.gov

If you have been displaced from your home, you can search for temporary or permanent housing on The New Jersey Housing Resource Center at NJHRC.gov or by calling the toll free assistance line at 1-877-428-8844.

VISIT WWW.NJHRC.GOV TO VIEW OR SEARCH AVAILABLE PROPERTIES TODAY.



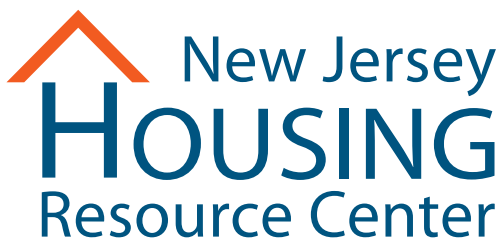
FIND TEMPORARY HOUSING DUE TO HURRICANE SANDY IN THREE EASY STEPS:

- 1)** Visit www.NJHRC.gov.
- 2)** Click on [Find Housing](#) in the middle-right portion of the webpage.
- 3)** Click [Temporary Housing Due to Hurricane Sandy](#) from the menu. The page that opens will display a list of available, temporary housing properties throughout the State of New Jersey.

You are now able to search by County and City to locate temporary housing due to Hurricane Sandy that is best suited for you and your family.

**VISIT WWW.NJHRC.GOV OR
CALL 1-877-428-8844 FOR ASSISTANCE TODAY**

Finding Housing Has Never Been Easier!



www.njhrc.gov

1-877-428-8844

Search Thousands of Affordable Units

See Unit Features, Pictures & Maps

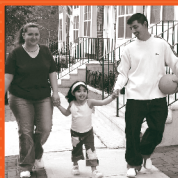
Special Features for People with Disabilities

Learn About Housing Programs & Services

It's Free and Anonymous!

Vacancy Information is Updated Bi-weekly!

Use Any Computer!

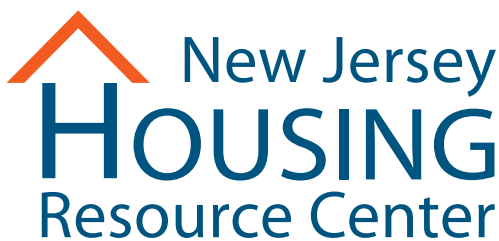


"NJHRC, Where Everyone Can Find a Home"

A partnership between:



¡Encontrar una vivienda nunca ha sido tan fácil!



www.njhrc.gov

1-877-428-8844

- » Busque entre miles de unidades economicas
- » Vea las características, las fotos y los mapas de las unidades
- » Características especiales para personas con incapacidades
- » Infórmese acerca de los programas y servicios de viviendas

¡Es gratis y anónimo!

¡La información sobre viviendas

disponibles se actualiza cada dos semanas!

¡Use cual quier computadora!

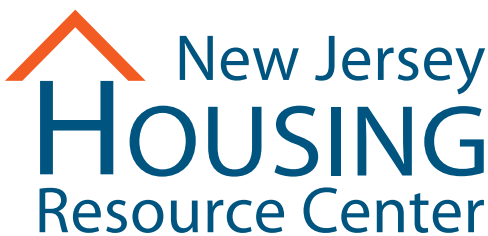
"NJHRC, el lugar donde todos pueden encontrar un hogar"

A partnership between:



FREE

Listing Service for NJ Property Managers and Home Sellers



www.njhrc.gov

Can't get to a computer? Call 1-877-428-8844

An online, searchable housing registry.

- » Another great way to advertise units/properties
- » Over 7 million searches performed since the site's launch in May 2005
- » Showcase your unit's unique features:
 - › Show Maps and Pictures
 - › Include Accessibility Features for People with Disabilities
 - › List Market Rate and Affordable Units and Properties

A partnership between:



Here's What People Are Saying about the HRC:

THE PROPERTY MANAGER

"I love it! Tons of tenants call me about units. I use it every time I have a vacancy."

Karen Clark, Stuyvesant LLC
Maplewood, NJ

THE REALTOR

"I experienced 30 calls about a for-sale property I listed two weeks ago. In another case, I wound up selling a different house than the one I listed on the HRC. It's easy to use for the realtor and consumers."

Marc Laurano, MWL Preferred Properties LLC
Highland Park, NJ

THE MARKETING PROFESSIONAL

"I have extensive experience in apartment advertising, both print and Internet. As the former publisher of a leading Internet apartment guide, I have been very involved in how to get better Internet results. The NJ Housing Resource Center website is one of the best apartment search sites I've seen. It has great depth of content and is extremely user friendly for both property managers and rental consumers. I think the most impressive part is that it's free. Our biggest obstacle in recruiting landlords was convincing them to spend their advertising dollar with us. Since the HRC is free and a superior service I would think every NJ landlord will be using it."

Janice Taylor Freedman, Resident Data
Somerset County, NJ

THE RENTER

"The HRC is great! I was able to SEE the units before I called the landlord. I loved all the choices too."

Jenene Taylor,
West Orange, NJ

THE HOMEBUYER

"Today was my first time on this website. This site answers all of my questions. Hopefully before the end of the year, my husband and I will become homeowners. Keep up the good work."

Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Davis
Irvington, NJ



The NJHRC is available in English and Spanish to both Consumers and Property Owners. The Call Center is staffed by bi-lingual customer service representatives and the website is readable in Spanish.

A partnership between:

