

# NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

**Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

Visit [ncsha.org/awards](http://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](mailto: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:**

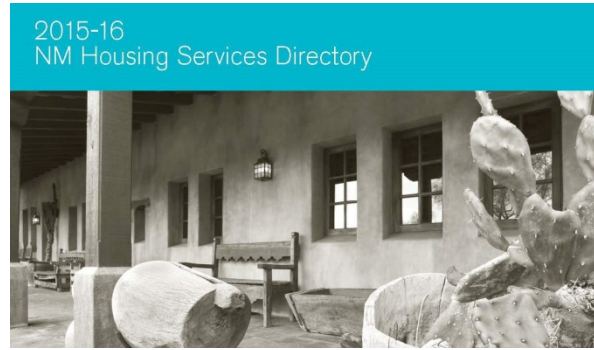
\_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.**

| <b>Communications</b>                 | <b>Homeownership</b>                   | <b>Legislative Advocacy</b> | <b>Management Innovation</b>   |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 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                     |
| <b>Rental Housing</b>                 | <b>Special Needs Housing</b>           | <b>Special Achievement</b>  | 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       |  |                             |                                |



**NM Housing Services Directory**  
NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry  
Communications: Promotional Materials and Newsletters

**Background**

New Mexico is the fifth largest state in the nation, but ranks 37<sup>th</sup> in population. With just over 2 million residents scattered across 121,600 square miles, multiple hours of travel often separate individual communities. In addition, New Mexico has the second highest poverty rate in the nation -- 22 percent. These two factors combine to create a large population of people who are in need of affordable housing but who do not have resources nearby. Moreover, there has not been a central place where residents can research what housing assistance -- including emergency shelter and homelessness prevention services -- is available in the state.

Because the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) is a small organization, we have very limited resources available to promote our programs and services. In the last 20+ years, we have had only one traditional marketing campaign. Therefore, we strive to develop promotional materials that have multiple applications and uses.

**Target Audience**

MFA set out to create a comprehensive affordable housing directory that would be the definitive document for anyone looking for affordable housing or for any agency providing housing services in the state. It would also promote MFA's products, illustrate the variety of programs we use to make affordable housing available, and would highlight the services provided by the agencies we fund. The piece would be a way to reach audiences outside of our normal scope of work by providing them with a useful tool.

**Strategic Objectives**

MFA's Affordable Housing Directory was designed to meet several key mandates in the organization's strategic plan including:

- Strengthen the social development of the people of New Mexico by providing them access to resources
- Foster relationships with MFA's partners
- Increase visibility and public awareness of MFA
- Be the go-to organization in the state for all information regarding affordable housing

To achieve these strategic objectives, as well as reach the target audiences and be cost-effective, MFA used a simple but innovative approach. First and foremost, the directory was designed with the end user in mind at all times. This led to the basic organization of the directory as well the various listings (alphabetical, geographic and by type of service) of housing services providers. Second, MFA programs and products were promoted in a helpful but subtle way. This provided MFA with a cost-effective means to educate users without overwhelming them with information. Finally, out of respect for New Mexico's fragile economy, the Housing Services Directory was

designed in a way that conveys professionalism and not flashiness. From the photos and colors to the paper stock, the directory is reflective of who MFA is: competent, approachable, and helpful. The 60-page document is spiral bound.

**Development**

MFA’s IT department wrote a program to identify, sort and extract all of MFA’s former and current partners and funded organizations from MFA’s master contact list by the type of service provided. That list, which numbered 592 entities, was organized according to what user group – homeowners, developers, government agencies, etc. - would be searching for a particular housing service. All of the 592 entities were researched and/or contacted to verify their contact information and scope of work. The data was then coded into the master contact list.

The directory was divided into four main sections: MFA Approved Lenders; Housing Services Providers; Rental Properties; and Affordable Housing Organizations. This layout allows all user groups to search the directory according to their specific housing need:

| USER GROUPS                                       | SECTIONS OF THE NM HOUSING SERVICES DIRECTORY |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
|   | MFA Lenders                                   | Housing Services Providers   | Rental Properties  | Affordable Housing Orgs.  |
| Homebuyer   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homebuyer Counseling</li> <li>• Home Repair and Rehab</li> <li>• Weatherization</li> <li>• Utility/Mortgage Assistance</li> </ul>   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat for Humanity</li> <li>• Trade Associations</li> </ul>  |
| Renter  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weatherization</li> <li>• Utility/Mortgage Assistance</li> <li>• Specialized Housing</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized</li> <li>• Affordable</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade Associations</li> </ul>  |
| Homeless/<br>Precariously Housed                  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Shelter</li> <li>• Fleeing Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Homelessness Assistance</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services</li> <li>• Utility/Rent Assistance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized</li> <li>• Affordable</li> </ul> |   |
| Special Needs                                     |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral Health Services</li> <li>• Specialized Housing</li> </ul>  |  |   |
| Community Service Providers                       |   |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Housing Authorities and Federal Agencies</li> <li>• Trade Associations</li> </ul>  |
| Housing Providers                                 |   |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Housing Authorities and Federal Agencies</li> <li>• Developers and Technical Assistance Providers</li> <li>• Trade Associations</li> </ul> |
| Government Agencies and Non-Housing Organizations |   |  |  |   |

Innovative coding was used in to make the directory more user-friendly. For example, MFA used a legend of symbols to identify the types of services offered by each entity in the Housing Services Providers section:

| HOUSING SERVICES   | SUPPORT SERVICES   | SPECIALIZED HOUSING   | ICON LEGEND |
|--|--|---|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Emergency Shelter</li> <li> Fleeing Domestic Violence</li> <li> Home Repair and Rehabilitation</li> <li> Homebuyer Assistance and Counseling</li> <li> Weatherization</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Behavioral Health Services and Substance Abuse Recovery</li> <li> Emergency Utility, Rent and/or Mortgage Assistance</li> <li> Family Support Services</li> <li> Homelessness Assistance and Prevention</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Elderly Housing</li> <li> Housing for Persons with HIV/AIDS</li> <li> Housing for the Developmentally Disabled and Persons with Behavioral Health Needs</li> <li> Housing for the Physically Disabled</li> <li> Transitional Housing</li> </ul> |             |

The Rental Properties section was divided into two subsections, affordable and subsidized, and properties offering housing for individuals with special needs were coded by type:

**RENTAL TYPES**    **DD** Developmentally Disabled    **E** Elderly    **SN** Special Needs  
*All listings that are not coded are family properties.*

The Affordable Housing Organizations section was divided into four subgroups: Local housing authorities and federal agencies, Habitat for Humanity, developers and technical assistance providers and trade organizations. In addition to an alphabetical agency listing, the Housing Services Providers section was sorted into two other agency listings: one by area and one by the type of service offered. Because of New Mexico’s vast rural areas and limited resources, this search option was critical.

Information about MFA’s programs and products is interspersed throughout the directory. A summary of each of MFA’s program appears on the first pages, along with MFA’s 2014 production numbers. Scattered throughout the directory are reflections on MFA’s 40-year history and an invitation to visit our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary website. Not only are MFA programs and products listed as resources, but readers are encouraged to find out more about MFA via “teasers” located throughout the directory.

**Results**

MFA’s Housing Services Directory is a one-of-a-kind resource in the state of New Mexico. It has proven to be an exceptional promotional tool, an invaluable resource for our staff and an excellent opportunity to expand and develop our partnerships.

We initially printed 1,500 copies in April, 2015. As of June 1, all but 300 had been distributed through the partner agencies listed in the directory, to members of our Congressional Delegation and local officials who often receive requests from constituents, and to individuals requesting them through our website or coming to our offices looking for housing assistance. We also receive requests come from a wide spectrum of entities, including those we don’t normally come in contact with and/or who are not directly involved in affordable housing. Those entities, such as the University of New Mexico, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the New Mexico Department of Aging, tell us they use the directories to assist their clients. Other requests come from new potential partners such as REALTORS, lenders or service providers as well as from groups we want to deepen relationships with like developers, property owners and managers.

In addition, the directory saves the MFA staff time. When requests for housing-related assistance come in, they can give the seeker a directory or direct them to the electronic version on our website. And the partner agencies listed in the directory are very grateful to MFA for getting the word out about their services.

**Effective Use of Resources**

The cost to produce the Housing Services Directory was \$17,298 and it will be updated and reproduced biannually. The cost for an average newsletter to be written, photographed, designed, printed and mailed is just over \$10,000. A newsletter is unlikely to get much more than five minutes of review; the directories are in use year-round. The cost efficiency of the directory becomes even clearer when compared to a promotional campaign, which can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. And unlike a targeted promotion that reaches only a specific group, the directory reaches people we would never attract through a campaign. In addition to the important results that MFA has achieved with its target audience, it also accomplished critical -- if not mundane -- tasks while developing the Housing Services Directory. As a result of the need to publish up-to-date contact information, MFA now keeps its mater contact list current at all times. An unexpected result is that our bounce-back rates on mass emailings have fallen from about 21 percent to just below 2 percent.