

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			

Partnership Works, NCHFA 2014 Report on Achievements

NSCHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry

Communications: Annual Report

Overview

Promoting the vital work of affordable housing among influencers and decision-makers can be a herculean task in a fast-paced culture of competing interests and soundbites. Social media has made communication instant and has reduced complex issues to hashtags. Educating lawmakers and community leaders on the value of housing means engaging them within a very brief timespan.

The N.C. Housing Finance Agency's *2014 Report on Achievements* does just that by using clear, direct and concise text – accompanied by captivating photos that employ subtle persuasion – to showcase fundamental housing work and its critical value. In a world where traditional communication methods are often ignored, our report is far from conventional. Eschewing the financial statements and corporate data that are hallmarks of a traditional annual report, our report focuses on our production and accomplishments and how they affect the economic health of North Carolina. It is designed to communicate a powerful message through a brief format: Affordable housing investments benefit citizens, workers, businesses and communities across the state.

And it immediately attracts our audience's attention by emphasizing our use of public-private partnerships, a business model that State leaders, including the governor, are promoting to realize cost savings and project efficiencies. Our 2014 report shows how our investments drew in capital and knowledge from more than 250 partners and ultimately leveraged state and federal dollars to deliver an exceptional return for North Carolina's citizens and economy.

Target Audience

Lawmakers. While the most ideal method for educating elected officials about our work may be their firsthand participation in property events and tours, it's not possible to engage everyone on that level. By providing a snapshot of our work to all elected officials, the report establishes credibility for how the dollars appropriated to our programs are spent. It offers a ground-level view of affordable housing in the state for an audience who may only hear it spoken about infrequently and in general terms.

Community and business leaders. The report is often an introduction to affordable housing for community and business leaders. Educating them on the value of our work for their citizens helps to gain their support for affordable housing development and helps them become effective advocates with local, state and national elected officials and decision-makers.

Partners. The report helps establish a community of affordable housing development among our partners. Not only are individual partners' developments featured in the report, but partners get to see the statewide picture of accomplishment to which they contribute. They also can use the report to educate their own local officials.

Potential partners. Potential partners can range from cities and towns that we would like to green-light more affordable housing developments to lenders and realtors who can promote our home buyer

programs to their clients. The report introduces these audiences to who we are and what we can do to benefit them, their businesses and their communities.

Strategic Objectives

Emphasize the Agency's unique ability to forge private-public partnerships to achieve results

Our Report on Achievements has had an economic focus for the past several years that needed to remain front and center for state and federal budget decision-makers. This year, we decided to home in on a key element of economic interest in North Carolina: public-private partnership. That's nothing new in affordable housing – public-private partnerships have always been integral to our work.

In the 2014 report, we were able to show the number and type of partners we regularly work with to leverage state and federal housing investments. We discussed how two local investor consortia have grown up to support Housing credit development, procuring out-of-state private equity investors and loans from local community banks. We also showed how home ownership development benefited from partnerships between cities and private builders that maximized public dollars.

Demonstrate how our financing benefits the state and local economies

Elected officials want to see results, particularly the economic impact of public investment. We meticulously calculate and thoroughly review the numbers reported, using the RIMS II Model from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis to determine economic impacts. As a result, we are able to provide the kind of numbers that get attention and document the effect of our work on the state's economy. This includes real estate activity financed (\$1.1 billion), jobs supported (12,800), tax revenues generated (\$68.8 million) and wages and spending sent through the economy by our production (\$1.39 billion).

With North Carolina still rebounding from the recession, leaders continue to focus on job creation. We backed up the jobs numbers in our report with photos of construction workers – a strong visual reminder that affordable housing equals jobs.

Illustrate the geographic and demographic diversity of the communities and people who benefit

While North Carolina's 100 counties differ economically, all share a need for affordable housing for young families, low-wage workers, seniors and persons with special needs. Since lawmakers are most concerned about their own constituencies, the report provides examples from areas across the state to demonstrate how affordable housing investments translate into real economic gains for communities large and small. We also show a diversity of people helped to dispel preconceived notions about whom affordable housing serves and to make the benefits for all North Carolina citizens resonate with elected leaders.

Highlight the role of the state's Housing Trust Fund in addressing unmet needs

North Carolina's Housing Trust Fund is its most flexible housing resource – able to finance home ownership and rental apartments, new construction, rehab, and emergency repairs. It is the state's largest source of funds to finance supportive housing and emergency repairs/accessibility modifications.

With so many competing interests for state funding, it's imperative that state lawmakers understand both the vital need for and the successes of the Housing Trust Fund. We devote an entire panel of the

report to the Trust Fund's annual and cumulative accomplishments. We show how the Trust Fund is a key component of our public-private partnership – drawing in corporate and foundation dollars to help local sponsors meet community needs.

Structure and Costs

While electronic reports are increasingly popular, we consider print to still be most effective for our goals and our audience. We believe that elected officials may not take the time to click on a web link, but will quickly flip through a printed piece. Agency staff can also point out a photo or program that matters to specific legislators during an office visit or hallway discussion, which wouldn't be possible with an electronic version.

The format and size are tailored to our primary audience. A three-panel brochure with attractive photos and crisp, clear text provides a powerful, quick delivery of crucial messages. By not loading the report with financials – which are easily accessible on our website – we can highlight the production numbers and case studies that best illustrate our accomplishments.

To showcase this year's focus on partnerships, we staged the cover photo at a property opening that illustrates the many partners it takes to make affordable housing happen: developers, managers, contractors, elected officials, investors and residents. As an added benefit, the photo offers another subtle reminder of the many and varied jobs supported by affordable housing development.

The bulk of the report depicts residents of apartment communities, single-family homes and supportive housing developments who graciously shared their time during professional photoshoots. Showing real North Carolinians brings our work to life for lawmakers who don't always get to meet firsthand the beneficiaries of the programs they fund.

Quotes from our partners underscore the value of affordable housing for citizens, workers, small and large businesses – even architecture firms and banks – and communities across the state.

Because the report is critical to making our case for funding, we invest time and money in the product. Total cost for this year's report was just under \$9,000: \$2,500 for professional photography, \$4,500 for graphic design, and \$1,800 for printing. Concept, text and photo direction were produced by Agency staff.

Benefits

We use the *Report on Achievements* to raise awareness and strengthen our ongoing message among our elected officials about our work and its benefits for North Carolina. In addition to distributing copies in person to lawmakers and state leadership, we showcase the annual report at a legislative breakfast we host each year and ensure that our partners have copies to share with their local officials.

We believe that our message is being heard. No better example of that exists than in our Governor's 2015-2017 budget proposal, which stated:

“The N.C. Housing Finance Agency represents one of the greatest returns on investment of any state money spent.”