

NCSHA 2016 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

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 awards@ncsha.org or 202-624-7710.

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			

Communications – Creative Media

The program we are submitting under the Creative Media category is one that could easily be replicated by any other HFA. What makes it special is not only the fact that it is a video with an effective promotional message, but we produced this video at minimal expense by reusing elements from our 2015 annual report. We don't do video productions as much as we would like because videos tend to be expensive and time consuming. But taking the approach we did this year saved the agency both time and money, plus it provided us with a promotional piece we can put to effective use immediately. Research shows that people visiting websites are increasingly looking for videos rather than just text descriptions about an organization. The video we are submitting to the NCSHA awards competition will help us meet that consumer demand.

Early in 2015, our Human Resources Division came to the Communications Division asking for a video they could put on our website to help job candidates better understand the work done by PHFA. Since producing videos usually carries a higher price tag, we decided to produce a video about PHFA that could be used by the entire agency, so its cost could be better justified.

We're always careful in our use of the agency's resources, so the communications team brainstormed how we could produce a first-rate video at the most affordable cost. Our solution was to repurpose the professional photography we have been collecting every year during the production of our annual reports. One element we don't scrimp on for our annual reports is the photography, because we use that photography on our website and in brochures, as well as in our annual reports. Our idea was to get even more use out of those photos by now using them as the key elements in our new video. We decided we would add a message from our executive director to the video so the new production wouldn't consist entirely of still images.

Telling the stories of our customers

As NCSHA demonstrates every year through its marketing efforts, describing the work and successes of HFAs is often best achieved by telling the stories of the customers we've helped. As we got further into this project, we decided that using our new video to tell the stories of our customers was the way to go. One of the first things we did was work with our video production vendor to identify a narrator. We listened to several demo reels, and when we heard the samples from one particular narrator we knew his voice was perfect. It is the voice of a storyteller. We let our production vendor pick the music, and we were pleased with their choice.

We don't have video production equipment at PHFA. But we do have a communications staffer who was a TV journalist. He wrote the script for the video. We felt this was the smartest approach, not just because it saved some expense but because we felt a PHFA employee would best be able to tell our story. He could capture the passion we bring to fulfilling our HFA mission. We believe that was a wise decision.

Photography from past projects is effectively repurposed

We then provided our production vendor with all our customers' photographs gathered from the last 5 annual reports. We wanted to make sure the production company had all the visuals it needed to make the video fast-paced and entertaining to watch.

Our production company showed us a few production templates we could use for shaping the look-and-feel of the video. Just like working with Animoto (which NCSHA has frequently demonstrated), the template provides an overall look to the piece. But unlike Animoto, the software we were using allows much more control over the motion-effects and timing of each visual element. At first, we were frustrated because each template we were shown seemed to fall short and didn't fit our vision for the piece. But finally we found the template that we instantly knew was the best match with our narrator and the music. About this same time, we also videotaped our executive director delivering a short, personal message for adding to the video. So all the elements were now in place, and our vendor could start editing. Regarding the length of the video, we wanted to stay close to 2:00, which we felt was long enough to share our message while still producing a video that would work well on YouTube, at conferences, and in other venues. Today's audiences have shorter attention spans, so we wanted to keep the video to a reasonable length.

Achieving a low-cost production with high production values

We left many of the production decisions up to our vendor. That is their area of expertise, so we wanted to give them creative freedom. They presented different drafts of the video to us, and each time we made minor suggestions about some photographs and their placement in the video. At this point, the actual production went more quickly. The end result is a video that we feels can help anyone understand the work done by PHFA and reflects well the professionalism and caring nature of our housing finance agency. Both English and Spanish subtitling were added to help give the video even more versatility with the audiences we serve.

In conclusion

We are submitting this video for award consideration because: 1) we think our creative reuse of our annual report photography was a smart way to hold down costs, and 2) we think the final production is well done and will be a much-used and powerful marketing tool. The total cost of this video production was only \$4,000, and that includes the professional narration and music.

Our staff is excited to have this video available for their use. In addition to wide visibility through our YouTube page linked to our website, this video will be used by all of our divisions every time they have an opportunity for public outreach. Plus we are promoting the video on social media and when other opportunities arise. So, a video that was requested by our HR Division will, in fact, help all our divisions better provide much-needed public outreach about the agency's housing mission.

Like PHFA, some other housing agencies may be hesitant to develop marketing videos because of their expense. We hope our success at producing a professional video at a reasonable price will encourage other HFAs to use videos to tell their story by using photo elements they probably already have available. With a public that increasingly is expecting, even demanding, the availability of videos via the Web, we think our experience provides one example for how this can be done more affordably.

The video is available for viewing on the agency's YouTube page at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8_Muh-LTUI