



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

Entry Name RESPECT

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

HFA _____

Submission Contact Mary Kate Harrington, Communications/Public Information Specialist

Phone 401-450-1356

Email mharrington@rhodeislandhousing.org

Program Contact Patricia Trinke, Human Resources Director

Phone 401-457-1171

Email ptrinque@rhodeislandhousing.org

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 _____

Entry Name _____

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Management Innovation: Human Resources

Overview

Rhode Island Housing has always believed that it is everyone's responsibility to make a difference, one individual or family at a time. It is that belief which spurred us to implement a new agency-wide initiative through which we emphasize best practices and recognize those who go above and beyond in showing 'RESPECT' to all they encounter.

What is 'RESPECT'?

Respect is more than just a word; it is an attitude and a feeling, a way to present yourself and conduct your business, something for which to strive. At Rhode Island Housing, it is even more; the credo RESPECT is a group of goals set forth for us, by us, that we work together to achieve. Based on the belief that we are all responsible for making a difference, RESPECT is our firm commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our internal and external customers in a professional, respectful and knowledgeable manner. Through this program we promise to take ownership of issues, listen and be proactive and responsive to all individuals so that we can provide timely and complete resolutions for their unique needs and concerns. No two people or situations are alike but our goal remains the same: *to exceed the expectations of others across the board.*

Why RESPECT?

In conceiving this new paradigm for our agency, we knew that the only way for the program to succeed would be if it were embraced by all staff from all areas of the agency. To get feedback and 'buy in' from staff, HR created an inter-divisional team of employees who were identified as informal leaders within their respective divisions to meet with a professional consultant to create a customer service/employee recognition program.

The credo 'RESPECT' was chosen, not just for all the positive connotations of the word but, for the many actions that go into earning and exercising it. We created a unique acrostic, breaking RESPECT down into seven key components of exceptional customer service:

- R – Responsive:** Taking ownership and providing solutions in a proactive, timely manner.
- E – Empathetic:** Recognizing and understanding each customer's unique needs and showing sincere concern for the situation.
- S – Service-oriented:** Understanding that our role is to serve; that we all touch a customer, either internal or external. Being approachable; respectfully responding to needs and questions in a timely, positive and proactive manner.
- P – Professional:** Fostering a positive reputation for the Agency through our actions with others. Demonstrating the Rhode Island Housing image and brand.
- E – Ethical:** Being transparent in all we do; adhering to strict moral, social and regulatory standards. We do the right thing!
- C – Compassionate:** Understanding and caring about our customers' needs by putting ourselves in their shoes.
- T – Trustworthy:** Demonstrating honesty, fairness and integrity in building strong relationships.

This credo became both the summary and central focus of the program around which we were able to develop new standards and best practices for everything from phone calls and email to hard copy correspondence and guest management.

Rolling Out RESPECT

In order for RESPECT to effectively permeate every division in Rhode Island Housing and every aspect of what we do we had to find a way to introduce the idea to employees and keep it on everyone's minds day in and day out. We utilized regular communications and staff meetings with our Executive Director, a page dedicated to the effort on our employee intranet, regular updates from division directors and key management as well as the members of our internal Customer Service Committee to help introduce the effort.

We launched the campaign at a kick-off event led by our Executive Director with the entire staff. Committee members created a fun and lively 'skit' (which included the Executive Director) to introduce the need for the initiative. During this kick-off meeting, our Executive Director explained why the program is important and how it will improve not only our external communications but internal discussions and interdepartmental collaboration as well (helping us break down the silos). It was also at this kickoff event that we began distribution of RESPECT branded materials.

RESPECT on a Daily Basis

The biggest challenge for the campaign was to begin to change the culture here at Rhode Island Housing. If we wanted our staff to rise to the new challenges we were going to have to give them the tools to do so. To begin to change the culture, we created a mandatory training plan called "Creating Great Service." Employees at all levels were required to attend this training beginning immediately following the kick-off event. We then scheduled training sessions on 9 different topics related to the RESPECT standards including managing multiple priorities, inbound and outbound call models and even the impact of different behavioral styles on effective communications (DiSC).

We knew it would be important to keep the RESPECT credo at the fore in the time immediately following the roll out and also on a daily basis moving forward. We developed a RESPECT logo that complemented our Rhode Island Housing logo and decided to saturate our surroundings with the RESPECT brand and ideals. We created inexpensive branded materials (t-shirts, lanyards, mouse pads and table tent cards), offered training sessions on excellent customer service, employee communications, best practices, dealing with difficult people, etc. and created a page on our employee intranet devoted specifically and entirely to RESPECT. The goal was that all employees would constantly be reminded of the excellence for which they strive, represented by RESPECT.

Our employee intranet features a page focused solely on the RESPECT initiative. The page outlines the effort, prominently features the acrostic and includes the RESPECT employee recognition nomination form. We also regularly update the page with inspirational quotes, style guides, best practices documents and tips for excellent customer service.

RESPECT in Action

The final piece of the RESPECT initiative is the reward aspect, where we recognize our employees for embodying one or more of the tenants of the RESPECT program. The RESPECT Customer Service Awards are a chance for our staff to recognize each other for their accomplishments. Employees can

nominate someone they feel goes 'above and beyond' and submit this to our internal Customer Service Committee.

The RESPECT awards are divided into three categories:

- Monthly Award Winners: Nominations can be submitted by peers, supervisors or directors and are reviewed by the Customer Service Committee on a monthly basis. Approved nominations are then announced on the RESPECT page of the intranet; nominees receive a t-shirt along with another small gift and are entered into the running for the quarterly awards.
- Quarterly Award Winners: Customer Service Committee reviews all of the approved nominations from the previous quarter to determine the top three who then become RESPECT Award Winners. These employees are given a framed certificate representing their accomplishment, a \$35 gift card, a piece of Rhode Island Housing apparel and have their photograph featured on the RESPECT page of the intranet, in addition to being entered into the running for the Annual Award.
- Annual Awards: At the end of twelve months, the will review all of the quarterly award winners and select one as the winner of the Annual Award. An Annual Awards breakfast will be held to announce the winner who will receive a two-month parking pass for the garage closest to our building, lunch for their division, a \$50 gift card and a RESPECT Award winner jacket.

RESPECT-able Results

By instituting a reward-based program that gives the power of recognition to the staff, we have created an environment in which employees want to put their best foot forward at all times. In addition, we have increased awareness of the amazing work done by those employees who go above and beyond while incentivizing the desire to emulate that behavior. Through this one program we have been able to offer the staff of Rhode Island Housing a tool kit for impeccable customer service and make that the standard for all of our internal and external interactions.

Why it is meritorious:

Innovative: by bringing together staff from all divisions to design the program we have been able to identify, standardize and reward best practices in a way that is unique to our Agency.

Replicable: program can easily be adapted and implemented by other HFAs.

Respond to a management challenge or opportunity: increased conscientiousness among staff and improved employee morale and collegiality in the workplace.

Achieve measurable improvements in agency operations: created a more responsive and productive environment across all departments and improved customer service.

Provide benefits that outweigh costs: any effort has costs but a staff operating at highest efficiency based on the seven key components of excellent customer service retains and attracts more business to help offset those costs. Additionally, the majority of the effort to date has been undertaken by staff who serve on the committee.

Demonstrate effective use of resources: there was an initial start up investment for the customer service trainings; this was an investment in our staff and their ability to meet the needs of our diverse client/customer base.

Achieve strategic objectives: increased professionalism and promptness, created a more harmonious working environment, reminded staff of need for professionalism and RESPECT for both internal and external communications.



RESPECT

Customer = internal and external individuals

Component	Definition	Actions to Demonstrate
Responsive	Taking ownership and providing solutions in a proactive, timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking ownership for solutions. • Being proactive in solving problems and setting expectations. • Having a sense of urgency.
Empathetic	Recognizing and understanding each customer's unique needs, and showing sincere concern for the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to understand (not agree or disagree). • Being aware of your body language and tone of voice.
Service-oriented	Understanding that our role is to serve; that we support all our customers, either internal or external.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile. • Understand your role is to serve customers. • Be approachable. • Be solution focused.
Professional	Demonstrating the Rhode Island Housing image/brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with respect. • Look the part. • Maintain your skills.
Ethical	We do the right thing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest in all transactions. • Keep confidential information confidential.
Compassionate	Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind. • Show an interest. • Offer to help.
Trustworthy	Demonstrating honesty, fairness and integrity in building strong relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do what you say you'll do. • Admit mistakes and take ownership for solutions.



Creating Great Service Training Plan

Module/Target Audience	Content Overview	Length	Offerings
Defining Great Service <i>(all employees)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service Credo • RESPECT defined • What all customers care about – customer imperatives • RIH service standards • Real life application (case study scenarios) 	2.5 hours	2012 5 sessions
Coaching Great Service <i>(supervisors, managers and directors)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviors to look for and reinforce • Understanding the coaching model 	2.5 hours	2012 2 sessions
Inbound and Outbound Call Models <i>(employees who do a lot of phone work)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices for managing inbound calls • Developing the talk track • Best practices for managing outbound calls 	2 hours	2012 & 2013 2 sessions
Dealing with Difficult Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the conversation (creating a win-win) • De-escalating emotions • Influencing without authority 	3 hours	2012 & 2013 3 sessions
Active Listening and Effective Questioning Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading verbal and non-verbal cues • Applying listening best practices • Probing to build understanding 	2 hours	2012 2 sessions
Running Effective Meetings <i>(any one who may need to)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation tips and techniques • Best practices for meeting planning and follow-up 	1.5 hours	2012 & 2013 2 sessions



<i>facilitate/run a meeting internally or externally)</i>			
Managing Multiple Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the difference between important tasks and urgent tasks • Building a weekly plan • Prioritizing daily 	2.5 hours	2012 2 sessions
Business Acumen <i>(managers and supervisors)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the impact of business financials • Recognizing the importance of managing expenses (and the impact on the business) • Taking individual ownership for the Agency's success 	3 hours	2012 2 sessions
DISC Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine four primary communication styles and the behaviors required to be effective with each of the four styles. 	2.5 hours	2013 3 sessions

RESPECT Recognition Program

***To recognize “RESPECT” performance
throughout Rhode Island Housing
and to keep the focus on positive
behaviors that go above and beyond.***




RESPECT Recognition - Eligibility

Minimum eligibility requirements for program are as follows:

- All regular and temporary employees of Rhode Island Housing excluding Division Directors
- Nomination must identify which form of RESPECT the employee demonstrated (responsive, empathetic, service oriented, etc)



RESPECT Recognition Program

Type	Timing	Process	Recognition
Initial Nomination	Within a month of nomination submittal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nominations can be submitted by peers, supervisors or directors electronically (form on RESPECT page of intranet). •Nominations are reviewed by the Customer Service Committee monthly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Approved nominees will receive a special shirt and another small item just for being nominated. • Nominations announced on the RESPECT page of the Intranet
AWARD WINNERS	Quarterly	Committee reviews all of the approved nominations and awards the top three for the quarter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Winners receive a framed certificate, \$35 gift card, piece of housing gear and their photo on the RESPECT page of the intranet. •Qualify for Annual Award. 

RESPECT Recognition Program

Type

Timing

Process

Recognition

Annual
Award

Annual

- At the end of 12 months, the Customer Service Committee will review the quarterly award winners to determine one annual award winner.
- Winner is announced at the annual awards breakfast.

Annual winner will receive a 2-month parking pass for Biltmore Garage, lunch for their division, a \$50 gift card and a RESPECT award winner jacket!



RESPECT Home Page - Windows Internet Explorer provided by Rhode Island Housing

https://employees.rhodeislandhousing.org/Respect/

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RESPECT Home Page

Tuesday, June 25, 2013 Sitemap Search go

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Home > RESPECT

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 **RESPONSIVE** - Taking ownership and providing solutions in a proactive, timely manner.

 **EMPATHETIC** - Recognizing and understanding each customer's unique needs and showing sincere concern for the situation.

 **SERVICE-ORIENTED** - Understanding that our role is to serve; that we all touch a customer, either internal or external.

Being approachable; respectfully responding to needs and questions in a timely, positive and proactive manner.

Today's Quote

Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning. - Bill Gates



It is everyone's responsibility to make a difference, one individual or family at a time. We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of both our internal and external customers in a professional, respectful, and knowledgeable manner. We take ownership, listen, and are proactive and responsive to all individuals; providing timely and complete resolutions to their unique needs and concerns. Our goal is to exceed others' expectations.

Tools

- RESPECT Nomination Form
- RESPECT Standards
- Programming your Voice Mail
- Vacation Rule - GroupWise - Full Days Out of Office
- GroupWise - Half-Day Out of Office



Local intranet 100%

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9:41 AM



RhodeIslandHousing
working together to bring you home

Tent Card FRONT



RESPONSIVE – Taking ownership and providing solutions in a proactive, timely manner.



EMPATHETIC – Recognizing and understanding each customer's unique needs, and showing sincere concern for the situation.



SERVICE ORIENTED – Understanding that our role is to serve; that we all touch a customer, either internal or external.

Being approachable; respectfully responding to needs and questions in a timely, positive and proactive manner.



PROFESSIONAL – Fostering a positive reputation for the Agency through our actions with others.

Demonstrating the Rhode Island Housing image and brand.



ETHICAL – Being transparent in all we do; adhering to strict, moral, social and regulatory standards. We do the right thing.



COMPASSIONATE – Understanding and caring about our customers' needs, by putting ourselves in the other person's shoes.



TRUSTWORTHY – Demonstrating honesty, fairness and integrity in building strong relationships.

Tent Card BACK



Tent Card FRONT



Tent Card BACK

**Rhode Island Housing
thinks I am
a big deal**

RESPONSIVE **E**MPATHETIC **S**ERVICE ORIENTED **P**ROFESSIONAL **E**THICAL **C**OMPASSIONATE **T**RUSTWORTHY

