

2014 Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

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

Entry Name _____

HFA _____

Submission Contact _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Qualified Entries must be received by **Tuesday, July 1, 2014**.

For more information about Qualified Entries, [click here to access the 2014 Entry Rules](#).

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page.

HFA _____

Entry Name _____

Communications	Homeownership	Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing
<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"/> 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
Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

2014 Annual Awards for Program Excellence – NCSHA Communications Category – Creative Media

Rent Reform Microsite

Overview

For more than 40 years, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) has been on a mission to give Alaska residents access to safe, quality and affordable housing. The corporation provides home mortgages, a variety of loans, tax credits and other programs that support public housing, senior housing, and energy efficiency measures. Created and governed by Alaska statutes, AHFC has offices in 16 communities.

AHFC's Public Housing division is just one of 39 Moving to Work agencies across the country. In response to a requirement to increase program efficiency, the division chose to adjust the way it administers its housing assistance. Dubbed "Rent Reform", the goal was to make families seeking public housing simpler, provide more assistance to more Alaskans who need it, and to empower work-able participating families to become financially independent.

Rent Reform has practical implications for two distinct audiences: those who are able to work, and those who are elderly or have a disability. For those able to work, AHFC is going to reduce the amount of financial assistance provided gradually over a period of five years; however, they will receive more case management and tools to help families become financially independent. These participants became part of the "Step" program. For the senior group and those with disabilities, AHFC simplified the formula it used to calculate rent owed by eliminating income deductions. AHFC called the program targeting this audience, "Classic".

While convenience came as a result of a simpler formula, some participants would see an increase in rent owed; and therefore, audiences had to be clearly identified and program changes had to be communicated clearly and in a very sensitive manner.

Initial Concepts to Execution

AHFC developed a microsite, <http://rentreform.ahfc.us/> that served to clearly and delicately communicate program changes. The site clearly delineates information for participants in each program, Step or Classic, and includes a page of Frequently Asked Questions.

Target Audiences

- Public housing participants who are work-able adults
- Public housing participants who are senior citizens or live with disabilities.
- Local media

Content

The Rent Reform microsite was designed to portray complicated information in a concise, reassuring and approachable manner. Its simple organization ensures that audiences are easily able to self-identify which program they fall into and access information most important to them. Its straightforward and clean layout helps avoid a bureaucratic feel, while its images and tone remain upbeat and informative.

Results

Since the microsite launched in November 2013, it has consistently attracted several hundred visits per month. By April 2014, the number of average pages viewed has increased, as well as session duration. We interpret this to mean that people are increasingly engaged as the program changes took effect starting in April. Anecdotally, AHFC has received positive feedback on the clarity of the information portrayed. It has become a resource for local media in understanding how public housing program policies will affect participants but more importantly, while AHFC's rent reform initiative was widely reported on, it was done so in a factual manner and did not sensationalize what could have resulted in very negative stories about the agency's program management. Instead, it helped to elevate a statewide conversation about the struggles families face and the need for even more affordable housing.

Rent Reform

QUESTIONS?
Call 855-686-3751,
907-586-3751 (Juneau),
or email us at
rentreform@ahfc.us.

Welcome.

The goal of Rent Reform is to make the public housing process much simpler, to provide assistance to even more qualifying Alaskans, and to empower families to become independent.



Rent Reform

One of our most important jobs here at AHFC is to provide housing opportunities to all Alaskans. However, over the last few years, our supply of affordable housing has not kept up with the growing demand. While federal assistance is decreasing, families are staying longer than they were a decade ago, and for every unit available, there are four additional families seeking assistance.

AHFC developed our rent reform programs based on an in-depth understanding of the housing needs that are unique to Alaska and an extensive study of the most successful housing programs in the nation. Our goal is to make the process simpler for Alaskans, to provide assistance to more Alaskans who need it, and to empower families in our program to become financially independent.