



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
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**DC Housing Finance Agency
Campaign to Save Private Activity Bonds
Communications Category – Creative Media**



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Communications Category – Creative Media**

Entry Summary

DCHFA joins media advocacy campaign to preserve private activity bonds in the tax reform bill.

Campaign to Save Private Activity Bonds

The end of the year is typically a celebratory and reflective period of holiday cheer and a time for setting goals for the upcoming New Year. However, the effects of the pending federal tax reform bill including the House of Representatives version of the bill initially eliminating private activity bonds (PAB) loomed as 2017 was ending. The District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA) coalesced with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Mayor Muriel Bowser, the DC Department of Housing and Community Development, the DC Housing Authority and housing advocates to voice its opposition of the elimination of PABs and to highlight the impact that PABs have had on the production of affordable housing in Washington, D.C.

Strategies

DCHFA joined the DC government in its lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill and took the message of the need to save private activity bonds and the accompanying 4 percent low income housing tax credit (LIHTC) to the public through press outreach and social media. On November 14, 2017, DCHFA's Executive Director and CEO Todd A. Lee joined Mayor Bowser and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) for a press conference at the U.S. Capitol in opposition of the GOP proposal to eliminate PABs. Following the press conference Director Lee was interviewed by [The Washington Post](#) where he explained PABs and the number of units of affordable housing created by it in D.C., "Private activity bonds are one such mechanism; they attract private-sector funding to affordable-housing projects by making lower interest rates available to developers. Our primary tool for financing affordable housing. Lee said roughly 9,000 units of affordable housing have been built with the help of such bonds since 2010."

DCHFA utilized all opportunities to inform the public how dire the loss of PABs would be if approved. In November 2017, Director Lee was scheduled to record a feature story about his time at DCHFA for *The Bond Buyer's* podcast. Director Lee used the opportunity to discuss the pressing issue of PABs. When

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the podcast was published on November 28, 2017 the headline was [“Affordable housing pressures from GOP tax proposals”](#) and the lead: “Financing for affordable housing projects would face new barriers if Congress approves a House GOP tax bill that eliminates the tax exemption on private activity bonds. Todd A. Lee, CEO and Executive Director of the District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency discusses the importance of the PAB exemption to advance affordable housing projects and how the sector is fighting back to preserve this borrowing tool.”

The November 15, 2017 ribbon cutting ceremony at Archer Park Apartments was more than a celebration of 190 new affordable apartments but an opportunity to convey and display to the media at the event how developments like Archer Park would not be possible without private activity bonds. Director Lee was one of the speakers at the ceremony and again was interviewed by *The Washington Post*: “the tax-exempt bonds — which effectively allow developers to borrow at municipalities' low interest rates — are important both by themselves and because their use can make projects available for a 4-percent tax credit for low-income housing. Combined, those breaks can bring private investment to low-return projects that would otherwise never get off the ground.” Mayor Bowser’s communications team created a graphic stating, “The congressional tax reform bill calls for the elimination of the 4% low-income tax credit. RESULT: NO RIBBON CUTTING TODAY” and displayed it as a placard at the ribbon cutting. DCHFA shared the graphic via Facebook and Twitter with #LIHTC periodically during the life of the issue. It was also used as DCHFA’s Facebook cover photo.

Buwa Binitie, Chairman of DCHFA’s Board of Directors was a panelist during a forum hosted by Bisnow on November 28, 2017. Binitie used the opportunity to discuss [DCHFA’s actions](#) “The agency will be busy working with the D.C. Council through December to take cautionary steps in case private activity bonds are eliminated. Even without the federal tax credits, there are many tools the District offers to create and preserve affordable housing.”

DCHFA’s response to the possible discontinuation of private activity bonds was two-fold, advocacy and a financing solution. In a matter of days, DCHFA organized a press conference at Delta Towers a seniors apartment complex whose planned redevelopment was now being threatened by the possible end of private activity bonds. On December 4, 2017, Mayor Bowser announced that DCHFA was planning its largest-ever offering in the agency’s history, planning to sell up to \$500 million of PABs in December to finance affordable housing projects in response to concerns about the final GOP tax bill which would prevent the financing of future developments. In order to further drive the message of this event, the DCHFA created two graphics that were displayed as placards at the event and residents of Delta Towers held signs stating “SAVE PRIVATE ACTIVITY BONDS, SAVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING” and “Issuing \$500 Million in Bonds = 4,000 affordable housing units financed.” Both messages were shared as social media graphics on Facebook and Twitter, for the life of the issue. The press releases were issued on the announcement and the press conference was attended by members of the media from radio, television and newspapers. News of the proposed \$500 million bond issuance was published by WHUR radio, NBC4, *Bisnow*, *The Bond Buyer*, *Washington Hispanic*, *The Washington Post* and footage from the press conference was broadcast as part of an NBC News story about the potential loss of PABs and 4 percent LIHTCs.

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Impact

The national advocacy of housing advocates and the HFA community resulted in the preservation of private activity bonds. DCHFA's media and social media activity on this issue garnered the attention of NCSHA's Marketing and Communications staff. Yolanda McCutchen, Director of Public Relations was invited to be one of the discussion leaders of NCSHA's webinar "Media Campaigns – Tax Reform" on December 6, 2017.

The campaign received 14 media placements in the local and national press, including four stories in *The Washington Post* during the month long time period.

Save PABs articles:

[GOP tax 'cuts' would be tax hikes for some D.C. families, officials say](#) – *The Washington Post*, November 13, 2017

[House tax plan faces bipartisan backlash over repeal of development incentives](#) – *The Washington Post*, November 15, 2017

[Podcast Affordable housing pressures from GOP tax proposals](#) – *The Bond Buyer*, November 28, 2017

[Affordable Housing Developers, Financiers Worried About Potential Effects Of Tax Reform](#) – *Bisnow*, November 28, 2017

[AFFORDABLE HOUSING: MAYOR ANNOUNCES \\$500 MILLION TO OFFSET GOP BOND CUTS](#) – *HOUSING ADVOCACY TEAM BLOG*, DECEMBER 4, 2017

[Mayor Bowser Seeks to Rectify House Tax Bill's Impact on Affordable Housing](#), NBC Washington, December 4, 2017

[D.C. mayor responds to GOP tax bill with historic housing construction bond offering](#) - *Streetsense Media*, December 4, 2017

[With Tax Reform Threatening Affordable Housing, D.C. Aims To Issue \\$500M In New Bonds](#) – *Bisnow*, December 5, 2017

[D.C. Mayor Has a Plan to Save 4,000 Affordable Housing Units](#) - *Next City*, December 5, 2017

[Tax bill changes spur District of Columbia's \\$500 million affordable housing deal](#) – *The Bond Buyer*, December 6, 2017

[Bowser ofrece construir más viviendas accesibles](#) – *Washington Hispanic*, December 8, 2017

[Treasury alleges that states misspent funds intended to help homeowners fight foreclosure](#) – *The Washington Post*, December 14, 2017

[Republican tax plan likely to preserve key development incentive, officials say](#) - *Washington Post*, December 14, 2017

[With Key Positions Remaining Unfilled, Housing Experts Decry Lack Of Guidance From HUD](#) – *Bisnow*, December 18, 2017

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The **congressional tax reform bill** calls for the **elimination** of the 4% low-income housing tax credit.

RESULT:
NO RIBBON CUTTING TODAY

#LIHTC

GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Issuing \$500 million in bonds

4,000 affordable housing units financed



GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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#SavePABs

WE ARE DC GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
 DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Media Exposure
 Nov 14, 2017 - Dec 14, 2017

