



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.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Recognizing difficulties recruiting, training and retaining quality employees, Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) decided in Fall 2017 to revamp its Human Resources (HR) approach. Under the leadership of KHRC's new HR Director, Deanna Johnson, rather than always reacting to the immediate personnel needs of the day, KHRC took a proactive strategy with some creative initiatives.

These initiatives took a holistic approach to the well-being of employees, addressing their physical, educational, and individual needs. The changes included establishing an employee: (1) Health & Wellness Committee; (2) Diversity & Inclusion Network; & KHRC Leadership University.

Health and Wellness Committee

Beginning with the physical health of our staff, the goal of the Health and Wellness Committee (HWC) is to encourage employees and their families to adopt and practice healthy lifestyles to improve their physical and mental well-being. The mission is to create a work environment where:

- Healthy behaviors are promoted, encouraged and supported;
- Employees have easy access to programs to help them make better lifestyle choices; and
- Employees have the opportunity to practice healthy lifestyle behaviors.

The Health and Wellness Committee is made up of five employees from diverse backgrounds. Committee members host monthly health initiatives to encourage employees to get moving and stay active. So far, the Committee has conducted a step challenge, awarding prizes to the top three highest steppers, and a bike challenge, featuring bike rides during the month of May and a police officer demonstrating safe riding techniques. If an employee didn't have a bike to bring, no problem! Topeka offers a bike share system that allows participants to rent bikes by the hour. The Committee welcomed a Nutrition Specialist to the office to share a presentation on eating for a healthier lifestyle and even sponsored a "Chop Challenge", a friendly cooking competition that was a great team building activity. Looking ahead, the Health and Wellness Committee plans to offer programs focused on mental health, yoga, meditation and additional outdoors activities.

Diversity and Inclusion Network

Turning to the individual and collective needs of our employees, the goal of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is to promote equality and inclusion in the workplace. The mission is to create a workplace environment where:

- Unconscious bias is looked at in an honest way to promote healthy relationships among co-workers;
- Training is conducted on an annual basis;
- Opportunities are presented that allow employees to learn from other cultures; and
- Employment practices are reviewed to ensure current practices are not discriminatory.

The Diversity and Inclusion Network reached out to the organizers of the Brown v. Board of Education Mural currently being painted across the street from the Brown vs Board National Historic Site. The mural celebrates diversity, equality, justice and inclusion, involving students, neighbors, and local artists in the design and painting.

The committee has donated ice, drinks, food, lunch and time to the artists and community members engaged with this special project. KHRC staff will even be painting a panel of the mural to evidence our passion for the project and its mission.

The committee hosted a Cinco De Mayo celebration, which included a presentation about Mexican-American Heritage and history and was catered by a local, Mexican-American business.

Infants in the Workplace

Continuing the theme of promoting healthy and happy employees, KHRC implemented an Infants in the Workplace program which allows parents of new born infants to bring their babies to work during their child's first 180 days. This program has the added benefits of:

- Encouraging employees to voluntarily return to work sooner;
- Reducing employee's day care costs;
- Increasing workplace morale and satisfaction, which in turn increases employee retention; and
- Promoting parent – child bonding and allowing working mothers to breast feed longer to benefit the infant's health.

KHRC has also designated a private office space for participating parents to enjoy quiet time with their infants. Other staff enjoy an environment where family is valued and promoted.

KHRC Leadership University

Turning to the education needs for our staff, this program was established to provide leadership and education opportunities to KHRC supervisors. Monthly classes offered include Coaching Employee's to Improve Performance, Fair Labor Standards Act, Progressive Discipline, Hiring the Best, Identifying Discrimination and Sexual Harassment and Generational Differences.

The University has helped supervisors lead their teams more confidently and effectively and led to excellent questions, conversations and ideas for improvement.

Taken together, while there is an initial investment of time and funds in this new approach to KHRC's Human Resources functions, the effort is already beginning to pay off. New employees and potential recruits appreciate the holistic focus and support KHRC gives its staff. Existing staff have been responsive to educational opportunities and a more family-focused work environment. An emphasis on health has yielded employees who take walking breaks and come back refreshed, recharged, and ready to dig into their work. Although it is too early to see hard data, KHRC is confident that its proactive approach will help the organization recruit and retain quality employees well into the future.

Kansas Housing Resources Corporation
Innovative Human Resource Practices
Management Innovation – Human Resources

