



# 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](mailto: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.

**Safe House for Victims of Human Trafficking**

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**Category:** Special Needs Housing

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**Subcategory:** Housing for Persons with Special Needs

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

The development of a Safe House where victims of human trafficking can receive emergency housing, crisis intervention and case management services

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**HFA:** MaineHousing

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**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](mailto:awards@ncsha.org).

MaineHousing  
Safe House for Victims of Human Trafficking  
Special Needs Housing  
Housing for Persons with Special Needs

## Safe House for Victims of Human Trafficking

In 2014, MaineHousing was invited to take part in a discussion about the need to treat and support victims of human trafficking. The meeting was held in the U.S. Attorney General's office, and attended by federal and state officials, state prosecutors, and domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, MaineHousing staff, led by then Director John Gallagher, learned that the number of human trafficking victims was growing and the only option at the time was to hold them in the Cumberland County jail largely to keep them safe. A need for safe housing with treatment services was identified, and MaineHousing was on board to help.

According to the Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, one of the most critical components of a proper response to human trafficking is the provision of adequate services for trafficking victims. Traffickers make extensive efforts to ensure that their victims are isolated and totally dependent on the traffickers for the material essentials of life and a sense of stability or normalcy. As such, it is very difficult for victims to escape their traffickers, and victims are often reluctant to testify against traffickers because of this dependence. The most significant gaps in services are related to accessing social supports and to meeting basic needs such as housing or shelter. This includes transitional residential facilities for those "exiting the life" or completing time in jail.

Again, from the Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, "Living assistance is a particularly critical issue in Maine, as it is such an essential service and is, currently, so lacking within the state. "There is very little we can offer women who are trying to escape . . . except maybe a hotel room for a few nights," stated prosecutor Megan Elam. She continued: "[There] are virtually no programs long-term for people . . . [there] is not an appropriate residential program to deal with . . . [sex trafficking] in the state of Maine."

In response to the identified need for a residential program, three state agencies came together to support the creation of the safe house.

MaineHousing had a number of single family foreclosures resulting from the housing crisis and, rather than continuing to hold them as REOs until a buyer could be found, we offered to donate a suitable building as a safe home. After reviewing the options, plus several site visits by victim advocates, the FBI, and federal probation officers, a suitable property was selected – a duplex family home located in an urban area near supportive services and educational and employment opportunities. MaineHousing agreed to donate the property, but it required repair – a new roof, heating system, and other repairs.

The State Attorney General's Office agreed to provide \$100,000 to MaineHousing to cover the costs of the repairs. MaineHousing contracted the repairs and maintained the house until a service provider was identified to take ownership and provide services to residents.

In order to address the needs of victims of human trafficking, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services agreed to fund the staffing and provision of treatment services at the safe house.

MaineHousing  
Safe House for Victims of Human Trafficking  
Special Needs Housing  
Housing for Persons with Special Needs

This three party agreement was formalized as a Memorandum of Understanding in November of 2016.

MaineHousing contracted for the building repairs and provided property insurance and maintenance pending the selection of a service provider by the Department of Health and Human Services. In March of 2018, the department awarded funding for treatment and residential services to the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. The contract for services includes the staffing of the Safe House with trained Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Advocates and the development of a treatment and case management program.

Both MaineHousing and the Department of Health and Human Services informed the municipality's city manager, chief of police, and code enforcement official and kept in regular contact regarding the project. The community based domestic violence and sexual assault service providers have a good relationship within the community and also provided information and ongoing communication with the city.

On April 19, 2018, MaineHousing officially transferred title for the property to the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. The safe house will be ready to accept its first residents this fall.

This project was a model collaboration among several agencies and organizations. The three state agencies – MaineHousing, Department of Health and Human Services, and the State Attorney General's Office – came together to address a critical need. Our collaboration was enhanced and augmented by many organizations committed to meeting the needs of victims of human trafficking including the US Attorney's Office, Maine prosecutors, the FBI and federal probation, and service providers. All provided valuable support and insight in selecting the property and designing the service plan. The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence was key to bringing together the service providers in the community where the Safe House is located and to accepting the responsibility for staffing and providing the treatment services.

While it took time to align our processes, the commitment to establishing a Safe House was unwavering. The Safe House is an example of innovation and flexibility. MaineHousing was willing to write off an REO as its contribution to the solution. The Attorney General's Office was willing to expend funds from a recent settlement agreement to fund repairs to the home. And the Department of Health and Human Services was willing to redirect their resources for victims of crime to support the operation of the Safe House.