



# 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.

Workforce Housing Initiative

**Category:** Special Achievement

**Subcategory:** Special Achievement

**Entry Summary:** A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.  
Interagency investments to advance employer assisted and workforce housing concepts

**HFA:** Oregon Housing and Community Services

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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).

## Summary

As Oregon's Governor Kate Brown has traveled across the state she has heard from employers, workers, and local leaders that the lack of workforce housing is a constraint to continued growth and prosperity. This lack of workforce housing at incomes between 60% Area Median Income (AMI) and 120% AMI undermines community vitality, hitting rural areas particularly hard. Oregonians with lower to mid-range salaries are struggling to find available housing options located within or near the communities they are working in. And employers ranging from manufacturing and engineering to health and education are unable to reach their full potential due to this void. According to Oregon's Office of Economic Analysis, "rural Oregonian incomes are on par with rural American incomes, however home prices are 30% higher here and rents are 16% higher....rural Oregon has experienced faster population growth than the rest of rural America – 50% faster growth in the 1990's and twice as fast in the 2000s to date. Today, rural Oregon's vacancy rate is significantly lower than rural America's. This implies the relative lack of new construction coupled with stronger population growth resulted in a lower vacancy rate, which, everything else equal, pushes up prices.

In response to this issue, Governor Brown directed her Regional Solutions teams to work together to address the workforce housing problem. Regional Solutions Teams are made up of regionally located state agency staff, across the state of Oregon, and are designed to work on the local level to identify priorities, solve problems, and seize opportunities to accomplish projects on the ground. Regional Solutions agencies include Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), Business Oregon, Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

In order to fully assess the extent of workforce housing issues, the Regional Solutions teams convened roundtable conversations with housing developers and business leaders to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to workforce housing. Employers, developers, and state agencies expressed a strong interest in working collaboratively to alleviate this problem. It was determined that housing for incomes between 60% of AMI and 120% AMI would be the focus for a Workforce Housing Initiative. While OHCS is working to address housing needs below 60% AMI through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and other state resources, there are no dedicated tools for middle income housing and the market is under producing new housing supply to meet the needs of the workforce above 60% AMI.

Regional Solutions agencies then identified tools to support workforce housing through public-private partnerships including access to loans, grants, and targeted technical assistance. Through a joint interagency procurement, five (5) state agencies pooled funding aimed at finding innovative and replicable solutions, with an emphasis on employer engagement. In January 2018, Regional Solutions issued a Request for Applications (RFA) to solicit projects for the Workforce Housing Initiative. This RFA produced 31 applications from across Oregon and included requests for funding to support infrastructure development, land-use planning, and financing workforce housing developments. Governor Brown worked with state agency directors to select five Workforce Housing Initiative pilot projects. These projects represent geographic diversity, with each project addressing different barriers.

OHCS is investing \$1.5 million, Business Oregon is providing approximately \$500,000 in infrastructure financing, and DLCD is contributing \$50,000 towards planning and technical assistance for the five selected pilot projects. Leveraging this small amount of state investment, the Workforce Housing

Initiative will provide approximately 115 Oregonians with housing opportunities that will allow them to live in or near the communities they are employed in. The incredible response to the Request for Applications has demonstrated a huge demand for this new program. Regional Solutions agencies will continue to collaborate by working with the Governor's Institute for Community Design to help formulate a legislative agenda for 2019. In addition, Regional Solutions teams will be facilitating continued learning through this cohort of pilot projects, in which they will troubleshoot and have the opportunity to learn about the approaches utilized to tackle Workforce Housing in Oregon.

A link to Governor Brown's Press Release on the Workforce Housing Initiative Awards can be found at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/newsroom/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?newsid=2721>