



CALL FOR ENTRIES

ENTRY DEADLINE: MAY 3, 2019, 11:59 P.M. ET

2019 ANNUAL AWARDS FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

NCSHA's Annual Awards for Program Excellence honor member state Housing Finance Agencies for their outstanding public purpose programs, projects, and practices. The mission of this prestigious program is to recognize exemplary HFA efforts, facilitate information sharing among HFAs, identify industry best practices, and encourage innovation.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented during NCSHA's 2019 Annual Conference & Showplace, to be held October 19 – 22 in Boston. All entries will be posted on ncsha.org/awards.

■ WHY ENTER?

- To share your HFA's successful programs with member HFAs nationwide to advance the industry
- To communicate your program design and implementation experiences for the benefit of your peers
- To benchmark your results with those of HFAs around the country
- To establish your team as innovators in the affordable housing community
- To recognize your employees' hard work

In addition, entrants may be invited to present on their program, project, or practice during a breakout session at NCSHA's 2019 Annual Conference & Showplace.

Winning HFAs will receive recognition:

- during the Awards presentation at the Annual Conference
- on the NCSHA website
- in announcements to NCSHA's members and partners
- in a press release sent to industry media

Award recipients also will receive:

- an attractive award to display in their offices
- the opportunity to have a complimentary professional photo taken during the Annual Conference for use in promoting this achievement

■ NEW IN 2019

Online Entry – NCSHA's Awards Submission Portal:

- Convenient and efficient entry online
- Secure management of your entries in the portal — return at your convenience to revise or submit additional entries until the May 3 deadline
- Instant confirmation that your entries uploaded successfully

Earlier Entry Deadline:

- Gives HFAs asked to present their programs at NCSHA's Annual Conference more time to prepare and make travel plans economically
- Allows NCSHA to hold the judging at a more convenient time of year for our industry experts, facilitating strong juror participation
- Enables NCSHA to finalize and announce the Annual Conference programming to members earlier in the summer

■ AWARDS CATEGORIES

NCSHA is accepting entries in the following seven categories; six categories are broken down into subcategories. Refer to pages 6 – 9 for subcategory definitions and judging criteria.

1. Communications

- Annual Reports
- Creative Media
- Promotional Materials and Newsletters

2. Homeownership

- Empowering New Buyers
- Encouraging New Production
- Home Improvement and Rehabilitation

3. Legislative Advocacy

- Federal Advocacy
- State Advocacy

4. Management Innovation

- Financial
- Human Resources
- Operations
- Technology

5. Rental Housing

- Encouraging New Production
- Multifamily Management
- Preservation and Rehabilitation

6. Special Achievement

7. Special Needs Housing

- Combating Homelessness
- Housing for Persons with Special Needs

■ ELIGIBILITY

- All HFA members of NCSHA are eligible to enter the Annual Awards for Program Excellence.
- Entries may include new programs, projects, and practices or qualitative improvements to existing programs, projects, and practices in all subcategories (including the Special Achievement category).
- Programs, projects, or practices must have been undertaken and/or operational between June 1, 2018, and April 30, 2019.
- An HFA may not submit an entry in a subcategory in which they won an award the previous year (includes the Special Achievement category). For reference, the list of 2018 winners is available on ncsha.org/awards.
- An HFA may submit only one entry in each subcategory (including the Special Achievement category).
- An HFA may not submit the same entry in more than one subcategory (including the Special Achievement category).

Any entry that does not meet the eligibility criteria or entry deadline or does not follow submission guidelines will be disqualified.

Entry Deadline: Friday, May 3, 2019, 11:59 p.m. ET
Visit ncsha.org/awards to enter.

■ JUDGING

Judges are chosen by NCSHA based on relevant expertise, experience, and impartiality.

Executive directors are encouraged to participate as judges for the subcategories in which their HFAs won the previous year; they may designate senior staff members to represent them, if necessary.

One HFA may be recognized per subcategory. Upon the recommendation of the judges, NCSHA reserves the right to name two award recipients in a subcategory or the Special Achievement category if the judges determine the entries are equally meritorious. Based on the recommendation of the judges, NCSHA reserves the right not to name an award recipient in a subcategory or the Special Achievement category.

■ ENTRY DEADLINE

NEW IN 2019 – ONLINE ENTRY: Each entry must be submitted as a single PDF via NCSHA's Awards Submission Portal by **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, May 3, 2019**. You will complete the entry form within the portal prior to uploading your entry.

Upon successful upload of your entry to the Awards Submission Portal, you will receive an automated confirmation email. If you do not receive an email, please contact NCSHA at awards@ncsha.org.

Any visual aids that cannot be submitted as part of the PDF may be mailed or shipped to NCSHA to arrive on or before Wednesday, May 8. Visual aids that arrive at NCSHA after May 8 will not be considered. NCSHA will confirm receipt of mailed or shipped visual aids via an email sent to the HFA contact indicated on the entry form within one week after the deadline.

■ ENTRY FEE

The entry fee is \$35 per entry.

Please make your check payable to NCSHA and mail it to:

**NCSHA 2019 Annual Awards
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 438
Washington, DC 20001**

Checks must be postmarked by the May 3, 2019, entry deadline.

To pay by credit card, download the Credit Card Authorization Form at ncsha.org/awards, complete the form, and email it to awards@ncsha.org by the May 3, 2019, entry deadline.

If you need to make a payment after May 3, please contact awards@ncsha.org or call 202-624-7710.

■ SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND RULES

NEW IN 2019: Submit all entries via NCSHA’s Awards Submission Portal (powered by Reviewr) by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, May 3, 2019.

In the portal, you may save your submission(s) and return later to work on incomplete submissions, edit submitted entries, or submit additional entries until the May 3 deadline.

Submitting an Entry

Step 1. Create an Account: Go to NCSHA’s Awards Submission Portal at <https://app.reviewr.com/s1/site//NCSHAAwards2019> to create an account.

Step 2. Follow the Submission Process: Once you have created your account, complete the online entry form, pressing **Save and Advance** at the end of each section.

A. HFA CONTACT INFORMATION

Provide the name, email, and phone number of the person at your HFA whom NCSHA should contact with any questions about this entry. The contact must be an employee of your HFA.

B. ENTRY TITLE/CATEGORY/SUMMARY

Entry Title: Enter the title of your entry exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the Awards Program.

Category and Subcategory: Select the category **and subcategory** you are entering. (Note: The Special Achievement category does not have a subcategory.)

Entry Summary: Provide a 500-character (maximum) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering; this summary will be posted on NCSHA’s website with your entry.

C. ENTRY FILE UPLOAD

Upload each entry as a single PDF that includes a **three-page (maximum) description** of your HFA’s program, project, or practice and any **supporting visual aids** (optional).

Entry Description: Explain how your HFA’s program, project, or practice fulfills each of the category’s judging criteria. Follow this format when developing your entry description:

Length Not to exceed three single-spaced, typed pages with one-inch margins; text only

Font Minimum 11-point font size

Header In the header on each page of the entry description, you **must include the following information:**

- a. HFA Name
- b. Entry Title
- c. Entry Category and Subcategory

Visual Aids: Photos, publications, weblinks, etc. are encouraged but not required. Some subcategories lend themselves to visual aids (example, Communications: Annual Report), while others may not.

Place any visual aids after your entry description in the PDF; visual aids cannot be uploaded as separate PDFs.

If a visual aid cannot be submitted as part of your PDF entry, you may send 10 copies to NCSHA for distribution to the judges (be sure to note that you are choosing this option by clicking the button under the file upload):

**NCSHA 2019 Annual Awards
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 438
Washington, DC 20001**

Each copy of the visual aid must be clearly labeled with:

- a. HFA Name
- b. Entry Title
- c. Entry Category and Subcategory

Packages containing visual aids must arrive at NCSHA on or by **Wednesday, May 8, 2019**. If fewer than 10 copies are provided, visual aids may not be distributed to judges.

Note: Entries and visual aids become the property of NCSHA and will not be returned.

D. PAYMENT

Indicate whether your HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA or emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org. The form can be download at ncsha.org/awards.

Step 3. Confirmation: After you press **Submit**, you should be directed to a confirmation screen and receive an email confirming successful submission of your entry.

Submitting Additional Entries

To submit another entry, press the **Submit Another Entry** button on the confirmation screen (followed by **Back to Listings** and **Add Another Submission**) or in the left-hand navigation of your account screen.

Editing Your Entries

To edit your submitted entries:

1. Log in to the Awards Submission Portal using the same credentials used to submit your entry.
2. Click **My Submissions** in the left-hand navigation.
3. Find the entry you wish to edit and click **View**.
4. Click the second blue **Edit** button on the right side of the page.
5. Scroll through and make your revisions.
6. Click **Save & Logout** or **Submit** to save your revisions.

■ CATEGORY AND SUBCATEGORY DEFINITIONS | JUDGING CRITERIA

Communications Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following three subcategories.

1. Annual Reports

Recognizes HFA annual reports that most effectively communicate HFA achievements and mission.

2. Creative Media

Recognizes the creative use of media—including electronic media, media campaigns, new media components, social media, and websites—that most effectively promotes HFA activities, programs, products, or services and advances the HFA mission.

3. Promotional Materials and Newsletters

Recognizes HFA promotional materials and newsletters that most effectively promote HFA activities, programs, products, or services and advance the HFA mission.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Communications category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Reach targeted audiences
- Achieve measurable results
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources
- Achieve strategic objectives

Homeownership Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following three subcategories.

1. Empowering New Buyers

Recognizes programs that best provide homeownership financing to HFA targeted customers.

2. Encouraging New Production

Recognizes programs that best encourage the new construction of affordable ownership housing.

3. Home Improvement and Rehabilitation

Recognizes programs that best provide home improvement and rehabilitation financing to HFA targeted customers.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Homeownership category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Respond to an important state housing need
- Demonstrate measurable benefits to HFA targeted customers
- Have a proven track record of success in the marketplace
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources
- Effectively employ partnerships
- Achieve strategic objectives

Legislative Advocacy Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following two subcategories.

1. Federal Advocacy

Recognizes agencies demonstrating the most efficient, effective, and creative use of resources to achieve federal legislative objectives.

2. State Advocacy

Recognizes agencies demonstrating the most efficient, effective, and creative use of resources to achieve state legislative objectives.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Legislative Advocacy category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Advance the overall mission of the agency
- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Demonstrate coalition building
- Forge effective relationships with state and/or federal legislators
- Achieve strategic objectives
- Anticipate, identify, and prioritize legislative issues
- Reach target audiences
- Employ analytical skills to anticipate and identify the potential ramifications of issues
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources

Management Innovation Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following four subcategories.

1. Financial

Recognizes outstanding innovation in financial management to strengthen agency operations and achieve strategic objectives.

2. Human Resources

Recognizes outstanding innovation in human resources management to strengthen agency operations and achieve strategic objectives.

3. Operations

Recognizes outstanding innovation in internal operations management to strengthen agency operations and achieve strategic objectives.

4. Technology

Recognizes outstanding innovation in the use of technology to strengthen agency operations and achieve strategic objectives.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Management Innovation category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Respond to a management challenge or opportunity
- Achieve measurable improvements in agency operations
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources
- Achieve strategic objectives

Rental Housing Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following three subcategories.

Note: The subcategories are not intended to recognize individual rental properties.

1. Encouraging New Production

Recognizes programs that best support the new construction of affordable rental housing.

2. Multifamily Management

Recognizes outstanding innovation in asset management or compliance monitoring practices in affordable rental housing.

3. Preservation and Rehabilitation

Recognizes programs that best preserve or rehabilitate affordable rental housing.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Rental Housing category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Respond to an important state housing need
- Demonstrate measurable benefits to HFA targeted customers
- Have a proven track record of success in the marketplace
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources
- Effectively employ partnerships
- Achieve strategic objectives

Special Achievement Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible.

This category recognizes HFA programs, projects, or actions that respond in an outstanding manner to an important state need; have a significant impact on a population, geographic area, or economy; and cut across traditional program lines.

The Special Achievement category does not have subcategories.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Special Achievement category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Respond to an important state need
- Achieve intended results
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs

Special Needs Housing Category

New—as well as qualitative improvements to existing—programs, projects, and practices are eligible for entry in the following two subcategories.

1. Combating Homelessness

Recognizes programs that best provide affordable housing and services for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

2. Housing for Persons with Special Needs

Recognizes programs, other than those focused primarily on combating homelessness, that best provide affordable housing and services for persons with special needs.

Judging Criteria

Entries in the Special Needs Housing category will be judged on the degree to which they:

- Are innovative
- Are replicable
- Respond to an important state housing need
- Demonstrate measurable benefits to HFA targeted customers
- Have a proven track record of success in the marketplace
- Provide benefits that outweigh costs
- Demonstrate effective use of resources
- Effectively employ partnerships
- Achieve strategic objectives

Entry Preparation Checklist

- Review the subcategory definitions to determine which you want to enter.
- Review the judging criteria for each category you are entering and write your entry description to respond to those criteria.
- Prepare your entry following the directions under “Submission Guidelines and Rules” in this Call for Entries.
- Submit your entry by **11:59 p.m. ET on May 3, 2019**, via NCSHA's Awards Submission Portal, at ncsha.org/awards.
- Send your entry fee to NCSHA by May 3, 2019.
- Send 10 copies of visual aids that cannot be included in your PDF to NCSHA to arrive by May 8, 2019.