

MassHousing's 2018 Annual Report

MassHousing

Communications: Annual Reports

HFA Staff Contact

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Introduction

MassHousing is a quasi-public Agency created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1966. We have a public mission to lend money to support rental and homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents. Since MassHousing's inception, we have provided more than \$23.9 billion in financing for the production and preservation of affordable rental housing and home mortgage loans.

At MassHousing we are adapting, evolving and changing to confront the housing challenges in our Commonwealth. In 2018 this included new leadership at our Agency. Our Annual Report needed to showcase how changes are manifesting at our Agency internally, to highlight our agility, to reflect the vision of our new leadership, and to acknowledge external forces of change in relation to our work in affordable housing.

The publication date needed to be moved up from the prior year to correspond to a "first annual event" where we acknowledged business partners and industry professionals. The event was to be similarly branded and the report needed to be in-hand to give to attendees.

Statement of Objectives

The Annual Report is an opportunity to catalog and communicate our current position, climate and accomplishments to our partners - both non-profit and for profit - stakeholders, policy makers, government officials and the people we serve. It is also a vehicle to communicate to our own staff what we have collectively achieved and to frame the current vision of our leadership.

We wanted a concept that would underscore what was going on internally and how this relates to shifts in the larger culture. We wanted to communicate our financial strength, and how we are working with agility to further our mission and empower the Massachusetts residents who rely on us.

Program Planning and Strategy

Our three-person marketing team met and brainstormed ideas for a report theme, including headlines, tagline options, visual direction and content to be included. We mapped out content for each spread in a way that would fit with the two strongest theme options. We assembled a "kitchen cabinet" group of Directors from across the Agency, selected by Senior Leadership, to solicit their feedback on the theme and structure, as well as to fill any gaps in content.

Agency accomplishments were aligned with real-world issues rather than categorized by our Agency's internal structure. We decided on a visual direction that was distinctly different from anything we had done before, signaling a new time for our Agency. The cover graphic suggests both a house and an arrow pointing up. Coupled with the word *change* and its definition, the

graphic implies energetic, positive progress. The bright, mosaic-like texture inside the graphic alludes to the diversity of our staff and the people we serve.

We carefully crafted headlines for each spread that had the same energy as our cover and used language with positive, forward-looking momentum. The bright cover graphic was placed on a stark, white background and printed with a strike-through to give it strength. We pulled the colors and the “mosaic” texture throughout the report.

An all-Agency photo was planned and executed to include the more than 350 people who work at MassHousing and to underscore the diversity of our professionals. Because we couldn't accommodate all the material for each topic with its own spread, we came up with a list of six words with the same upward, forward momentum, which we used - along with color cues - to delineate each section/topic within the report.

Quotations were chosen for each section, adding an emotional element to the stories that we told, and corresponding to our theme of change. We worked with a local photographer who builds great rapport with his subjects to get some lively environmental portraits and candid shots of people touched by MassHousing and to add an emotional layer to the stories we told. We used these images to balance out more utilitarian photos we had to source in other ways but needed to illustrate content.

As we were producing the report, we simultaneously repurposed the visuals and theme to brand the first annual event that would honor business partners and industry leaders. The report was planned as a printed piece to hand out at the first annual event. It was also mailed, published digitally, shared through a special edition email newsletter and social media.

The entire report was conceptualized, written, designed, proofread and prepped for publication in-house, saving money and giving us control over the timeline and edits. We bid the print job out to three different vendors, ensuring we received a fair price and to provide an opportunity to either a certified Women-Owned or Minority-Owned, Massachusetts-based business.

Results Documentation

Our hard copy annual report was mailed to 1,100 constituents and the digital file posted on our website received 610 link clicks.

The Agency's October MassHousing Update newsletter was themed on the annual report and emailed to just under 1,400 constituents. It saw an open rate of 40.4% and a click rate of 23.9%. Both are high for our averages, and well above Constant Contact averages for real estate (15.35% open and 5.54% click) and overall (16.1% and 7.1%).

Annual report-related social media posts (Twitter, LinkedIn specifically) generated a total of 9,440 unpaid impressions and garnered 116 engagements.

Some qualitative results included:

The new Executive Director was pleased with the fresh representation of the Agency and her debut MassHousing publication. The longtime Chairman of the Board of Directors praised the report calling it “the best yet” at the first annual event, and many staff commented positively on how the Agency was portrayed.

“Great annual report! Nice mix of data and stories and pictures. Impressive results. Nice mix of activities too so it really explains the full range of things that MassHousing does!” – *Business Partner email*

“I just scrolled through the Annual Report and wanted to express my amazement at your work. Each year, I think the report can’t get better or more original and yet it does. The graphics, the quotes and the data you highlighted were all incredibly impressive.” - *MassHousing Staff Member email*

We continue to hand out the report at external meetings and use it as a marketing piece, demonstrating the value of producing a printed copy. We continue to repurpose the MassHousing borrower profiles for social media posts. The 2018 Annual Report continues to serve as a strong marketing tool for the Agency and captures this moment in MassHousing’s history where we stand poised for “what’s next.”

Link to on-line version of MassHousing's 2018 Annual Report

https://issuu.com/bwoodmasshousing/docs/ar_2018_sections_for_digital_publicis?e=7519153/65357262