Tips on Preparing Entries for the Awards for Program Excellence

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Agenda

- Panel Discussion
- Categories & Subcategories
- Entries
- Entry Process
- Submission Portal
- Q&A

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Panel

- **Yolanda McCutchen**
  Vice President of Public Relations | District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency

- **Brian Philps**
  Senior Communications Specialist/ Brand Ambassador | Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

- **Chris Saur**
  Information Officer | California Housing Finance Agency

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Categories | Subcategories

❶ Communications
- Annual Report
- Integrated Campaign
- Special Event Marketing

❷ Homeownership
- Empowering New Buyers
- Encouraging New Construction
- Home Improvement and Rehabilitation

❸ Legislative Advocacy
- Federal Advocacy
- State Advocacy

❹ Management Innovation
- Financial
- Human Resources
- Internal Operations
- Technology

❺ Rental Housing
- Encouraging New Construction
- Multifamily Management
- Preservation and Rehabilitation

❻ Special Achievement

❼ Special Needs Housing
- Combating Homelessness
- Housing for Persons with Special Needs

Category Descriptions

Rental Housing Category

New — as well as qualitative improvements to existing — programs and practices are eligible for entry in these three subcategories. In each subcategory, entries that describe agency efforts to expand housing opportunity for households and communities of color and other historically underserved groups are especially encouraged.

Note: Individual developments are not eligible for submission.

1. Encouraging New Construction
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

Subcategory Descriptions

Help you determine where your program or practice fits.

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Judging Criteria

Entries are evaluated on the degree to which they meet these criteria.

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How many entries can an HFA submit?

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The answer is 18: One entry in each subcategory.

HFAs are encouraged to enter any subcategory including any you won the previous year.

The entry must meet the eligibility criteria for the category in which it's entered.

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What does a winning entry look like?

2023 Winner

Alabama Housing Finance Authority

Michigan State Housing Development Authority

2023 Entries

Alabama Housing Finance Authority:

AHFA Kids Financial Literacy Outreach

AHFA Kids, a "FUNancial" Literacy program, inspires and empowers children to develop informed money habits, setting them up for greater success as adults. Produced entirely in-house, our classes, videos, games, and other activities proactively present financial literacy concepts in entertaining and interactive ways. Our kid-friendly approach has reaped both internal and external benefits, capitalizing on employees' talents and cultivating relationships with partners and potential customers.

Examples: Writing to the Judging Criteria

Alaska: Untaken

Indiana: Emerging XBE Developer Tax Credit Set-Aside

Oregon: Reimagining Care, Housing Is Health

Virginia: Bright IDEA

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What is the selection process?

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National Council of State Housing Agencies

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Entry Preparation Checklist

❑ Review the category and subcategory descriptions to determine where your program or practice fits.

❑ Review the category's judging criteria for and write your entry description to respond to those criteria.

❑ Prepare your entry following the directions under "Submission Guidelines and Rules" in the Call for Entries.

❑ Submit your entry by **11:59 p.m. ET on May 1** via NCSHA's Awards Submission Portal.

Submission Guidelines & Rules

- Follow the directions on pages 4 and 5 of the Call for Entries.

- Prepare the **entry description** outside of the Awards Submission Portal.

- Include supporting **visual aids** if appropriate (optional!).

- When completed, combine your entry description and visual aids into **a single PDF**.

- In the Awards Submission Portal, complete **entry form** and upload the corresponding entry PDF when prompted.

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Entry Description

This is your explanation of how your HFA's program or practice fulfills each of the category's judging criteria.

TIP: Write to the judging criteria.

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Entry Description: Format

Length   Not to exceed three single-spaced, "typed" pages with one-inch margins

Text only — include any visual aids after page 3

Font   Minimum 11-point font

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Entry Description: Header

On every page include:

a. HFA Name

b. Entry Title

c. Entry Category & Subcategory

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Visual Aids

- Put all visual aids AFTER page 3 of the entry description — devote those first three pages to describing how your entry meets the judging criteria.

- Include photos, graphs, charts, etc. to help the jurors better understand your program or practice.

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Entry Form

The entry form is completed online in the Awards Submission Portal. Among the information you will be asked to provide:

- **Entry Title:** Enter the title of your entry exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the press release. No need to include the HFA's name in the title.

- **Category and Subcategory:** Not sure where your entry best fits? Call NCSHA for assistance.

- **Entry Summary:** Provide a 500-character (maximum) summary of the program or practice you are entering. This summary will be posted on NCSHA's website with your entry.

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Entry Summary

This is the elevator speech for your entry.

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Entry Summary Example

Oregon Housing and Community Services:
Oregon Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a critical part of the affordable housing spectrum and one of six priorities in Oregon's Statewide Housing Plan. To support Oregon communities seeking to develop PSH, OHCS sponsored the Supportive Housing Institute, coordinated and implemented by the Corporation for Supportive Housing. Since 2019, 18 teams have graduated, significantly increasing capacity to develop and operate quality PSH.

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Entry Summary Example

Rhode Island Housing:
Using Technology to Help Struggling Homeowners Get a Fresh Start

RIHousing's Fresh Start App allowed us to successfully roll out and administer $2 million in Hardest Hit Funds to struggling homeowners in the midst of a pandemic and when staff were working remotely. Using in-house staffing and resources, RIHousing designed, built, and rolled out our new online application portal in a six-week timeframe. The Fresh Start App stands as our first fully online, internally developed customer interface.
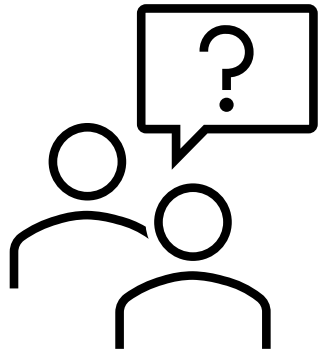
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Entry Deadline

Wednesday, May 1, 11:59 pm ET

- You will receive an automated email confirmation of the successful upload of your entry. Contact NCSHA if you do not receive that email.

- You may return to the portal to edit your entries any time up until the deadline.

- NCSHA staff will review each entry for completion and will contact you with any questions.

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Submission Portal

Questions?

ncsha.org/awards

Need Help?

awards@ncsha.org

or

202-624-8469

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Best of luck!