

FY21 Annual Report

Virginia Housing

Communications: Annual Report

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VIRGINIA HOUSING

2022 NCSHA Award Submission

ENTRY CATEGORY:

Communications – Annual Report

ENTRY NAME:

FY21 Annual Report



“Our goal for our FY21 annual report was to tell our story in an engaging and interactive way. We accomplished that using a digital format enhanced with video, animation and infographics.”

— Kyla Goldsmith-Ray, Communications Director, Virginia Housing

Brief Description

For our FY21 annual report, Virginia Housing had many new stories to share — from great successes in our affordable housing mission, to continued challenges due to COVID-19. With a stakeholder audience of extremely busy housing partners, government officials and others, we knew we needed to cover the year’s highlights in a clean, efficient and interactive way — we wanted users to be able to quickly jump to selected content, skip over content or read through the entire publication from start to finish — depending on their preferences and interests.

Why/When it was undertaken

As our fiscal year came to an end on June 30, 2021, we began compiling data for the annual report, and planned to design an eBook filled with short, skimmable stories, short video clips and animated infographics. This would allow us to present our information in a dynamic and compelling way, and allow our audience to choose the content they wanted to view.

What it has accomplished

The goals we set for our FY21 annual report were successfully met: it was designed and written to cover the year’s highlights — stories of challenges and successes — in an impactful, interactive format. It could be easily skimmed or read cover-to-cover, depending on the user’s preference. We included a clickable table of contents, allowing users to jump directly to the section or story of their choice, or they could simply click through from beginning to end using the navigational arrows on each page. Our busy stakeholder audience needed a simple format that delivered bite-sized content, and this annual report accomplished that.

Why it is meritorious and meets NCSHA award judging criteria

- **Innovative:** We took advantage of technology available to us through our existing Adobe Creative Cloud software, to produce and publish an eBook that could be accessed on any device, with no special software needed to view the rich media. *(By publishing the annual report as an eBook, even the embedded videos can be viewed by anyone with a web browser — something that would not have been possible had we simply published it as an interactive PDF, since interactive PDFs don’t currently support embedded video players).*
- **Replicable:** The approach we took in our FY21 annual report could be replicated by any organization, using in-house marketing staff or contractors. The ability to publish online documents is included with an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription (the industry-standard graphics suite used by creative professionals). Images used in infographics can be produced by staff, or licensed from one of the many online image libraries. Videos may be professionally produced, or shot and edited by staff.

- **Reach targeted audience:** The audience for Virginia Housing’s annual report is our stakeholders (government officials, nonprofit agencies, developers, lenders, REALTORS® and other housing partners). When our annual report was ready, we shared it via a link on our homepage and an announcement in our December eNews, which is distributed to our stakeholder email list. This was the most efficient way to reach our specific audience, and at no additional cost.
- **Achieve measurable results:** The FY21 annual report reached our target audience effectively and received positive feedback both internally and externally. After the report was published in November 2021, we shared the link via our December eNews and it was viewed more than 1,000 times.
- **Provide benefits that outweigh costs:** Costs to produce our FY21 annual report were minimal. Many of the videos and images were either pre-produced as part of other projects, or were shot and edited by in-house staff. Some of the still images came from our existing image library or stock libraries, or were provided by developers at no additional cost to us. Publishing the report as an eBook saved us the cost of printing hundreds of hard copies, and enabled us to share our story in a more interactive way.
- **Demonstrate effective use of resources:** The FY21 annual report eBook was designed and written by our in-house Communications Team with input from our Leadership Team and internal business partners. Some of the videos and images were provided to us at no cost, and some were shot by our staff and edited in-house.
- **Achieve strategic objectives:** Our strategic objective was to offer Virginia Housing’s annual report in a way that would tell our story in an efficient, yet engaging way. Our FY21 report provided the interactivity and visual engagement we sought — and provided viewers with the option to click through from start to finish, or choose specific content according to their interest.

Conclusion

Audiences today are busy, multitasking and have short attention spans — but they still crave relevant content. Virginia Housing’s stakeholders are no different. Our goal was to provide them with updates on the year’s accomplishments, without making them work too hard to find the content they were most interested in. Our FY21 annual report was created to be interactive, visually compelling and informative, and accessible from any device. It used short videos, easy-to-skim stories and animated infographics — all designed to tell the story of how our work is making a difference in the lives of Virginians who need affordable housing.

View Virginia Housing’s FY21 Annual Report: VirginiaHousing.com/FY21

Screengrabs from FY21 Annual Report eBook:

