

February 5, 2016

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

ATTN: Program Directors
Multi-Family Housing

FROM: Tony Hernandez /s/ ***Tony Hernandez***
Administrator
Housing and Community Facilities Programs

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2016 Site Manager and Maintenance Person of the Year Recognition Program

We are pleased to announce guidelines for our annual Multi-Family Housing Site Manager and Maintenance Person of the Year program, for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016.

Awards may be presented in each of the following four categories: (1) Site Manager of the Year for Elderly Housing; (2) Site Manager of the Year for Family Housing; (3) Site Manager of the Year for Farm-Labor Housing; and (4) Maintenance Person of the Year. We will choose a National winner in each of the categories this spring. The awards will be presented during the Council for Affordable and Rural Housing's 2015 Annual Meeting and Legislative Conference at the Ritz-Carlton in Pentagon City, Arlington, Virginia on June 12-14, 2016.

You should use the following selection criteria for making your choice in each category:

- Tenant satisfaction with the employee is high.
- Property managed or maintained by employee has good curb appeal on a continuous basis.
- Employee has no incidents of non-compliance and no unresolved findings.
- Employee consistently does more than what is expected.

Selections will be based on, but not limited to, the above criteria. Please use these primary criteria so that the program may be fairly and consistently administered across the Nation.

The nomination form/checklist (Attachment 2) includes all items necessary for a complete nomination package. Please attach the completed checklist to your nomination package.

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2017

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

A signed certificate from the National Office is also available for recipients of State Site Manager/Maintenance Person of the Year Awards. Please submit a completed National Office Certificate Request Form (Attachment 5), separate from your nomination package, by fax to (202) 720-0302, or e-mail to tonya.boykin@wdc.usda.gov.

Please consider also nominating your State award recipients. It is well worth the time and effort to prepare a nomination package in order to allow your State's awardee the opportunity to be selected at the National level and attend the awards ceremony in the Nation's capital.

Good photographs and letters of commendation from public officials and tenants are always beneficial. The selection panel at the National Office will use only the information provided in the nomination package to choose the award recipient from each category. If your candidate has done an outstanding job in an area not listed in this Unnumbered Letter, please note this in your nomination package.

Please be sure to address the criterion regarding compliance with Rural Development regulations. This includes the last supervisory visit and/or compliance review reports submitted by the Agency. This should include the complete report, letter to borrower/management agent and response from borrower/management agent, if available.

We request that you submit your package in a three-ring binder so that no information is misplaced or overlooked. Please clearly mark your State and housing category (Elderly Housing, Family Housing, Farm-Labor Housing, or Maintenance Person) on the nomination package. Address packages to: USDA-Rural Development, Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division, STOP 0782 – Room 1263-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0782.

The deadline for receipt of nomination packages for National Site Manager of the Year is **May 20, 2016**.

If you have any questions, please call Charlene Broussard of the Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division at (202) 720-1940.

Attachments:

1. Site Manager and Maintenance Person of the Year Recognition Program Guidelines
- 2A. Best Section 515 or Section 514 Site Manager Nomination Form/Checklist with Evaluation Criteria
- 2B. Best Section 515 or Section 514 Maintenance Person Nomination Form/Checklist with Evaluation Criteria
3. Sample Cover Letter Announcing Awards Program to People Who Might be Interested in Making Nominations
4. Example of Letter to Senator
5. 2016 Site Manager/Maintenance Person of the Year Award Winners National Office Certificate Request Form

SITE MANAGER AND MAINTENANCE PERSON OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines and suggestions for implementing or continuing a Maintenance Person of the Year and Site Manager of the Year program in your State.

1. Determine who is eligible to receive the award. The idea behind this recognition program is to reward maintenance persons and site managers who have close interaction with tenants and who deal with properties hands-on and on a daily basis. In some States, these employees live on the property they maintain or manage, while in others they live off-site and maintain or manage more than one property. Each State should decide whether it makes sense to limit the nominations to resident maintenance persons and site managers or to extend it to traveling maintenance persons and site managers. Remember that the recognition should be for an individual maintenance person and/or site manager and not owners or management companies.
2. Solicit nominations from tenants and Section 515 and Section 514 owners and management companies, as well as others you consider knowledgeable. The nomination process should be open so that you get the maximum number of nominations. Rural Development employees with a good knowledge of the nominee may make nominations, so long as the employee is not on the judging panel.
3. Publicize the program so as to maximize the number of nominations you get. Consider using local media resources and your local borrower associations and housing groups as well.
4. Make your selection based on the following criteria (you may add more, but at a minimum use the criteria below):
 - a) Tenant satisfaction with the nominee is high.
 - b) Property has good curb appeal on a continuous basis.
 - c) Property has no incidents of non-compliance and no unresolved findings during nominee's tenure.
 - d) Nominee consistently does more than what is expected.

Please use these primary criteria so that the recognition program can be consistent Nationwide.

Attachments 2A and 2B provide the national criteria and the necessary documentation that must be provided. It is important that all items are addressed so that the package will be considered complete. Please attach this completed checklist to your nomination package.

5. Use a panel of representatives from different stakeholder groups to make your selections. Use panels consisting of Rural Development Multi-Family Housing (MFH) staff and management industry representatives, as well as others you think would be appropriate. Possible panelists include tenants, staff from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a State Housing Finance Agency, a Public Housing Authority, or local civic leaders. The idea is to give an award that is recognized by a wide variety of industry and civic professionals.

6. If you have a large portfolio, you might consider using a two-phased process to make your selection. The Servicing Office could convene a panel to choose the best maintenance person and/or site manager in their Region and then forward the nomination package to the State Office, which could convene a panel to make the final selection.
7. Choose the best maintenance person and/or site manager and submit your nomination to the National Office by **May 20, 2016**. Attachment 2A, "Best Section 515 or Section 514 Site Manager Nomination Form/Checklist" or Attachment 2B, "Best Section 515 or Section 514 Maintenance Person Nomination Form/Checklist" must be completed and submitted with the complete package.
8. Notify the National Office of the name (or names) of the Maintenance Persons and Site Managers of the Year in your State if you wish to have a certificate signed by the Administrator for your State winner(s). Send this information, as well as the name and address of the facility or facilities the manager oversees, to Tonya Boykin, Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division at fax number (202) 720-0302 or e-mail at tonya.boykin@wdc.usda.gov. If you are nominating your winner for the Maintenance Person/Site Manager competition, please send (by Federal Express or similar carrier) the complete package upon which you based your determination. Please do not include your request for a certificate in your nomination package. Send it by fax or e-mail. Requests included in a package may be overlooked, as the nomination packages are not reviewed until immediately before judging takes place.
9. Consider presenting this award jointly with other management groups or at a State management conference. That way you can highlight the achievements of the awardee to a broad group of his or her peers. You may also consider presenting the award at the property the maintenance person or site manager oversees.
10. Take advantage of this opportunity for favorable press coverage. The maintenance person/site manager recognition program is a chance to highlight one of the most positive aspects of our MFH program. Not only will press coverage help remind communities of how our programs help them; it will also focus their attention on one of their truly outstanding members whom they may not know. Encourage press coverage by inviting the press to your awards ceremony and by distributing press releases.
11. Let your Congressional delegation know about the winners in their districts. This gives members of Congress a chance to send them a letter of recognition. It also highlights the success of our MFH program in serving communities. Attached is a sample letter you may use to send to your Congressional delegation for the Maintenance Person and/or Site Manager of the Year program.

**BEST SECTION 515 OR SECTION 514
SITE MANAGER
NOMINATION FORM/CHECKLIST**

Please address the following criteria in the space provided. Remember, keep your answers short and concise; however, the more letters, pictures, and documentation you can provide, the better. The nomination package should include the nomination letter summarizing nominee's qualifications and address all the following items and include attachments. This completed checklist should be attached to your nomination package. Failure to address each item will cause the package to be considered incomplete.

Name of the Site Manager Nominee: _____

Name of Property(s): _____

Name of Management Company (if applicable): _____

Year Began Managing at Property: _____

Brief Biography of Nominee:

SECTIONS I – III ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE NOMINATING PARTY:

I. Tenant Satisfaction.

Overall, are tenants happy with the efforts this site manager makes on their behalf and on the behalf of the property? How do you know? Include photographs.

Attach the following:

- Letters commenting on the nominee's accomplishments from Congressmen or other officials or tenants.

II. Curb Appeal.

Is the property attractively maintained and landscaped? Are the grounds free of debris? If applicable, you may wish to discuss particular actions the site manager has taken to increase the appeal of the property.

Attach the following:

- Pictures of grounds, buildings and signage indicating curb appeal.

III. Actions above and beyond what is expected.

Please describe any actions this site manager takes on a consistent basis which make him or her truly exceptional and outstanding. Good pictures also help in this category. Document activities such as:

- Pictures of tenants engaging in social activities.
- Copies of publications (such as newsletters) initiated and maintained for the residents.
- Newspaper articles depicting care of tenants.
- Articles or letters showing involvement in the community.
- Helping residents obtain additional services.
- Receipt of additional certifications and/or training.
- Implement practices that result in cost savings to the property.

Section I – III - Completed By: _____
(Nominating Person)

SECTION IV MUST BE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY:

IV. Compliance with Rural Development's Regulations.

Attach the following documents:

- Letter or written statement from servicing office verifying there are no incidents of non-compliance and no unresolved findings.
- Copy of last Supervisory Visit (MFIS Form 2000) (complete supervisory visit report must have been completed during the nominee's tenure at property).
- Copy of last Compliance Review (Form RD 400-8) (complete compliance review report must have been completed during the nominee's tenure at property).
- Copy of most recent Physical Inspection Report (Form RD 3560-11) (complete physical inspection report must have been completed during the nominee's tenure at property).

Section IV - Completed By: _____
(Agency Staffer)

**BEST MAINTENANCE PERSON
NOMINATION FORM/CHECKLIST**

Please address the following criteria in the space provided. Remember, keep your answers short and concise; however, the more letters, pictures, and documentation you can provide, the better. The nomination package should include the nomination letter summarizing nominee's qualifications and address all the following items and include attachments. This completed checklist should be attached to your nomination package. Failure to address each item will cause the package to be considered as incomplete.

Name of Maintenance Person Nominee: _____

Name of Property(s): _____

Name of Maintenance Company (if applicable): _____

Year Began Maintaining Property: _____

Brief Biography of Nominee:

SECTIONS I – III ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE NOMINATING PARTY:

I. Tenant Satisfaction.

Overall, are tenants happy with the efforts of this maintenance person? Are tenants satisfied with maintenance and repairs, and do they consider them to be taken care of in a timely manner?

Attach the following:

- Letters commenting on the nominee's accomplishments from Congressmen or other officials or tenants.

II. Curb Appeal.

Is the property attractively maintained and landscaped? Are the grounds free of debris? If applicable, you may wish to discuss particular actions the maintenance person has taken to increase the appeal of the property.

Attach the following:

- Pictures of grounds, buildings and signage indicating curb appeal.

III. Actions above and beyond what is expected.

Please describe any actions this maintenance person takes on a consistent basis which make him or her truly exceptional and outstanding. Good pictures also help in this category. Document activities such as:

- Pictures or articles featuring tenants engaging in activities geared toward the physical improvement of the property.
- Newspaper articles depicting care of property.
- Articles or letters showing involvement in the community.
- Receipt of additional certifications and/or training.
- Implement practices that result in cost savings to the property.

Section I – III - Completed By: _____
(Nominating Person)

**SECTION IV MUST BE PROVIDED BY THE AGENCY FOR SUBMISSION BY
THE NOMINATING PARTY:**

IV. Compliance with Rural Development's Regulations.

Attach the following documents:

- Letter or written statement from servicing office verifying there are no incidents of non-compliance and no unresolved findings.
- Copy of most recent Physical Inspection Report (Form RD 3560-11) (complete physical inspection report must have been completed during the nominee's tenure at property).

Section IV - Completed By: _____
(Agency Staffer)

SAMPLE COVER LETTER ANNOUNCING AWARDS PROGRAM TO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN MAKING NOMINATIONS

NOMINATOR'S NAME
NOMINATOR'S ADDRESS

Dear [NOMINATOR]:

I know you will agree with me that USDA Rural Development's Section 515 and Section 514 rental housing property management staff guarantee the success of these properties. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly and help to ensure a decent and sanitary living environment for the residents. Often they invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these management staff persons would do their jobs regardless of any recognition, I believe we as management industry professionals should let them know we appreciate their efforts. They deserve recognition for their outstanding work, and for this reason we are sponsoring a program to recognize the best Rural Development site manager and/or maintenance person in [STATE NAME]. I hope that you might be able to join me in this important program by nominating someone you consider to be an outstanding nominee.

Please use the attached form to nominate. You will note that the form asks you to comment on four factors:

- The level of tenant satisfaction with the nominee.
- The curb appeal of the property.
- Compliance with Rural Development's regulations
- The nominee consistently doing more than what the job requires.

Make your presentation as complete as possible. Letters from tenants, members of the community, housing groups, and others highlighting the good qualities of your nominee are encouraged. Also include any local media coverage which has occurred. Please enclose as many pictures as you like of the property that depict its curb appeal. Pictures of tenant activities sponsored, encouraged, or provided are beneficial. Submit the nomination package to [YOUR ADDRESS] no later than [YOUR DEADLINE].

After we receive the nominations, we will use the following process to choose the best nominee in [STATE NAME].

[DESCRIBE YOUR EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS HERE.]

We will present a plaque of recognition to the winner at a ceremony in [DATE, LOCATION, SPECIFY IF CEREMONY WILL BE HELD JOINTLY WITH SOMEONE ELSE OR AT AN ALREADY SCHEDULED CONFERENCE]. We also hope to engage the press in recognizing the exceptional efforts of the winner as well as all of our other great nominees.

I hope that you will make the necessary effort to complete the enclosed nomination form. I can assure you that it will be worth your time.

Sincerely,
[STATE DIRECTOR]

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO SENATOR
[PLEASE CONSIDER A SIMILAR LETTER TO YOUR
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION]**

Honorable [Name of Senator]
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0103

Dear Senator XXXX:

I am writing to inform you that [Name of Nominee] has been chosen as the (State Office) 2016 Site Manager of the Year/ or Maintenance Person of the Year for the USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing program. [Name of Nominee] operates the [Name of Apartments] in [City, State].

Rural Development administers a National loan portfolio of over 15,000 rural rental properties. In partnership with our private sector and non-profit borrowers, we house very low- and low-income rural families, elderly people, and farmworkers. The site managers of the properties we finance are employees of private companies, not the U.S. Government.

The site managers/maintenance persons guarantee the success of our properties. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly, and they often invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these managers would do their jobs whether or not they received recognition, we believe that as lenders and program managers we should reward excellent performance.

In this spirit, we conducted a Site Manager of the Year competition in each State this year. State Rural Development staffs convened panels of public and private housing management experts to choose their best site managers. They used the following criteria: 1) tenant satisfaction; 2) property curbside appeal; 3) compliance with Rural Development's regulations; and 4) consistent performance of actions above and beyond the call of duty. States could add to these criteria, but they could not change or drop any of them.

The comments we received from tenants and our State Offices are testimony to the outstanding performance of the site managers. Following are a few typical examples:

Insert actual excerpts from your nomination packages. The following are examples.

- *He/she makes us very proud of where we live.*
- *They are always there to help with anything you need, no matter how big or small.*
- *He/she shows genuine concern and really puts his heart into the job.*
- *They look after my parents when I'm not there. I don't know what I would do without them.*
- *He/she listens to the tenants.*
- *They enforces the rules fairly and makes us all feel safe.*
- *My friends [from outside the property] always comment on how beautiful and well maintained our grounds and buildings are.*

- *One of the greatest things about living here is the great security I feel. Once I became ill in the middle of the night. I pulled the chain on my alarm system and the managers were in my apartment immediately.*
- *Living here is like living at a big home full of loving friends and family. Once I was too sick to go to the barbecue [which the site manager had organized], so the site manager brought me a plate of food and sat down to tell me who was there and what the grandkids were doing. They really made me feel included in the fun.*

Mr./Ms. XXXXXXXX is a credit to himself/herself, the apartments they manage, there employer, the community, USDA, and the Federal Government as a whole. If you would like to recognize Mr./Ms. XXXXXXXX, you may contact them at XXXXXXXXXXXX. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact (Name of State) State Director (Name of State Director) at (State Office phone number).

Sincerely,

State Director
Rural Development

**2016 SITE MANAGER/ MAINTENANCE PERSON
OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS
NATIONAL OFFICE CERTIFICATE REQUEST FORM**

Please use this form to let the National Office know who the winners were in your State, for whom you would like a certificate prepared and signed by the Administrator. Please complete a separate attachment for each award winner.

TO: MFHPMD
PHONE #: 202-720-8473
FAX #: 202-720-0302
Contact: Tonya Boykin – tonya.boykin@wdc.usda.gov

STATE CONTACT: _____
STATE NAME: _____
PHONE #: _____
FAX #: _____

1. Name of Award Winner:
2. Name(s) of Property/Properties He/She/They maintain or manage(s): _____

3. Exact Name of the Category for Which He/She/They were chosen the winner (as it should appear on the certificate--for example, 2015 Pennsylvania Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year for Elderly Housing).

4. Address to which the certificate should be sent. (This should be someone at the State Office, so that the State Director can sign the certificate. Please include State Director's name.)

5. Date by which you need the certificate: _____