



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.

My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Overview

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority's (IHCDA) mission is to provide housing opportunities, promote self-sufficiency and strengthen communities. To accomplish this we: (1) create and preserve housing for Indiana's vulnerable population, (2) enhance self-sufficiency initiatives in existing programs, (3) promote a value-driven culture of continuous improvement and (4) promote place-based initiatives that will allow Hoosiers opportunities to improve their quality of life. As we strive towards our mission and strategic objectives, it is imperative that we communicate these accomplishments. Portraits of the Human Spirit: A Sense of Place was an innovative, interactive approach which has been widely successful in telling the true story of affordable housing.

Background

As 2016 drew to a close, Indiana government agencies prepared to welcome a new Governor, Eric Holcomb, and Lt. Governor, Suzanne Crouch. Governor Holcomb set forth his "Next Level" legislative agenda for when he took office in January 2017. The agenda was constructed around five pillars:

- Cultivate a strong and diverse economy by growing Indiana as a magnet for jobs
- Create a 20 year plan to fund roads and bridges
- Develop a 21st century skilled and ready workforce
- Attack the drug epidemic
- Deliver great government service

The timing was fortuitous, as the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) was preparing to lay the foundations of a four year strategic plan. We examined the five pillars to see how they might guide our journey. While we knew housing could play a big role in all the pillars, we were particularly excited to dialogue with our staff and partners about attacking the drug epidemic and delivering great government services. With those in mind, IHCDA decided to take a different approach to this strategic plan. We wanted to engage our partners, our staff, our board of directors and our executive team to better understand our current status, what areas we needed to improve upon, and also, importantly what new activities or roles might we consider adopting.

IHCDA's last strategic plan was developed by executive leadership, and over time had devolved into a random list of projects that were mostly created and completed by the executive staff. There was no staff engagement on developing the projects or clear measurable outcomes of success to judge, simply an excel spreadsheet of tasks with the infamous "red/yellow/green" stop light icon to update others on progress towards completion. The disconnect between staff and the plan was most keenly felt when there was turnover at the executive ranks. New executives were handed the list of tasks for their department, but unfortunately, no one in the department was aware of the tasks or why they were considered important. In fact, with turnover at one key role, the new executive found that of her five assigned projects, no one on her team, in fact no one in the organization knew exactly what four of them were intended to accomplish or what benefit they would bring to the agency.

We also realized we had not done a good job of soliciting strategic feedback from our partners. We conducted somewhat frequent customer service surveys, but over time the number of responses we received was dwindling and based on the narrative comments, we weren't sure our surveys were necessarily reaching our target audience.

IHCDA decided to solicit bids for a consultant to assist with this process. We looked for a consultant that had experience working with organizations to create "living" strategic plans, something we could incorporate into the daily "being" of IHCDA. Interestingly, we gravitated towards a consultant that did not have extensive experience with housing, Thomas P. Miller and Associates. This became extremely valuable as they consistently challenged

us with that well timed “why?” questions without bringing a lot of assumptions about what a Housing Finance Agency *should* do.

Partner Engagement

IHCDA decided to conduct regional listening sessions around the state. We felt it was important to leave our offices and visit our partners in their communities to maximize the number of participants. We invited our partners—Community Action agencies, homelessness providers, health care providers, developers, property managers, bankers, etc. to join us and offer feedback and recommendations. We held five sessions around Indiana:

- Northwest region—Lafayette, Indiana
- Southwest region—Jasper, Indiana
- Southeast region—Jeffersonville, Indiana
- Northwest region—Fort Wayne, Indiana
- Central region—Fishers, Indiana

IHCDA’s six person executive team attended each session, but we made it clear we were there to listen, not lecture, defend, or justify. We wanted our partner’s honest feedback via a SWOT analysis that was facilitated by our former Chief of Staff, now Deputy Chief of Staff to Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch. In each region we asked participants to provide comments on our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities as well as to give us feedback on what threats they felt were challenging their region. Participants were also asked to indicate which of Governor Holcomb’s five pillars they felt was most critical for their region. Specific questions posed were (see **Appendix A**).

Staff Engagement

We knew that with this new planning process, we needed to engage staff from the beginning to ensure that whatever priorities and action items were developed had strong buy in across the agency and served the overarching goal of delivering great government services. All staff needed to be aware of the priorities, what action items were developed to meet those priorities, and a way to stay engaged and see progress and outcomes. Our consultant facilitated the staff feedback sessions. These were a four hour SWOT analysis, where staff formed small groups and rotated around the room to address each component of SWOT—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to IHCDA. Executive staff did not attend these sessions in hopes staff would feel they could be candid and give honest feedback without fear or repercussions.

The sessions were optional, and about 50% of our team chose to participate. Additionally, to enable us to streamline the sessions, a survey was issued to staff to gauge how IHCDA’s mission, vision and values statements resonated with staff. Both tools gave us tremendous feedback.

Board Engagement

IHCDA is governed by a seven person board, four of whom are appointed by the Governor and three of whom serve by virtue of their position in state government.

Our consultant conducted one-on-one telephone interviews, approximately 30 minutes in duration, with each of the seven board members. The questions were framed to focus on IHCDA’s role in the state and IHCDA’s assets, strengths and challenges. Additionally, the interview process allowed time for each board member to share other items which they felt were important to this process. The results of these interviews were organized into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Executive Engagement

We held a two-hour session with our executive team and our consultant to discuss the organization's role within the state and to conduct a general assessment of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

Emerging Themes

What was very powerful about this process was seeing themes emerge and realizing that in many cases, stakeholders were thinking along similar lines but their perspective of why something was perhaps a strength or weakness varied depending on their relationship with IHCD (see **Appendix B**).

From these we honed in on four emerging priorities to guide our steps in the next four years:

1. Pursue Innovation in all Programs and Services
2. Provide Thought Leadership
3. Emphasize Continued Quality of Services
4. Continuously improve program management practices and partnership building

Next Steps

Our next steps are for our departments to examine the four priorities and begin to develop goals and action items that roll up under one or more. Staff will form teams, including some cross departmental teams, to begin work and gauge process. Each team will have an executive team member champion who will keep in contact with the team and help keep them focused and assist with any roadblocks or hurdles encountered. Teams will report on a quarterly basis and information will be shared with the entire agency via our Sharepoint site and also through quarterly all staff meetings.

We are also creating a subsite on our main website to update the public, especially our partners, on what steps we are taking to live our priorities. This will also be updated quarterly.

Appendix A – Partner Engagement

SECTION	QUESTIONS
Strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are IHCD's strengths? 2. What do you consider to be going well with IHCD? 3. If IHCD were a person, how would you describe the best parts of its personality?
Weaknesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are IHCD's weaknesses? 2. What areas does IHCD need to be better in? 3. Think about other partners/funders – in what areas are they doing better than IHCD?
Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What novel ideas are you considering? 3. Picture a specific client or customer of your organization – what would they say is an area that would most move the needle for them?
Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What threats do you see for your industry or in this region? 2. What worries keep you up at night? 3. Picture a specific client or customer of your organization – what would they tell you is the biggest threat to their well-being if not addressed?



Through our five sessions over 400 unique comments were captured.

Appendix B – Emerging Themes

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff (Quality) • Reputation • Flexibility • Finances • Innovation • Programs • Board • Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff (Retention) • Communication (Internal) • Communication (External) • Compliance (Excessive) • Data and Records • Silos • Limited Resources • Technology • Limited Space
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff (Retention) and Space • Thought Leadership • Advocacy • Communication (External/Marketing) • Partnering • Expand Programs • Additional Board Engagement • Funding and Finances • Staff (Utilization, Retention) • Equal Distribution of Resources • Community-Driven • Loan Servicing • Creative Solutions • Data • Follow-Through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff (Organizational Memory) • Federal Level • Overextending • Loan Servicing • Project-Based Vouchers • Distribution Metrics • Needs of Communities • Technology • Public Misconceptions • Mismatched Values • Regulations • Communication