



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:awards@ncsha.org).

## Overview

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (“IHCDA”) utilizes a two-year Qualified Allocation Plan (“QAP”) for its allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (referred to as Rental Housing Tax Credits or “RHTC” in the State of Indiana). As such, IHCDA’s RHTC staff members engage in an extensive QAP rewriting process every other year. Historically, this rewrite involved staff writing a draft, releasing that draft for written public comments and one public hearing, and then taking a final draft to the IHCDA Board of Directors for approval.

This system was determined to have a few flaws:

1. IHCDA staff had no formal mechanism for receiving input from the development community prior to writing the first draft. As such, the first draft was written with little or no input from the users of the QAP and any changes made came as a surprise to the developers when they read the draft.
2. The public hearing was the key feedback mechanism, but did not always allow ample time for all developers to provide detailed feedback and some developers would take up more time than others, potentially preventing others from commenting. Furthermore, not all developers were comfortable commenting on the QAP in a large public setting.
3. IHCDA would make a good-faith effort to implement changes based on comments made during the written comment period and public hearing. However, if staff misunderstood a comment provided or tried to implement a change but were not clear enough with the new language, the agency would be stuck with this mistake as policy for the following two years.

In 2014 IHCDA launched a new Continuous Improvement initiative to find ways to operate more efficiently across the agency. As part of this initiative, staff were trained on new methods for problem solving and group facilitation. These skills were used to implement a system of facilitating discussions around the QAP, resulting in a new rewrite process that was first used for the 2016/2017 QAP and then again for the 2018/2019 QAP (written in 2017).

## The Process

The first step in IHCDA’s new QAP rewrite process is to engage developers in one-on-one discussions before any drafting of the next QAP actually begins. This process starts immediately upon the the completion of the last competitive 9% tax credit allocation round under the expiring QAP. The purpose of getting feedback at this time is that developers still have the application process fresh in their minds and are able to talk not only about bigger picture policy decisions, but also about technical aspects of the QAP such as the application forms and threshold requirements.

As an example, the timeline used in 2017 to obtain feedback on the 2018/2019 QAP was as follows:

- February 2017: IHCDA’s Board of Directors approved 2017 credit reservations.
- March 2017: IHCDA compiled a list of developers actively seeking RHTC allocations in Indiana and reached out to each to offer a one-on-one meeting to discuss the next QAP. While the target audience was primarily developers, the list also included other key program partners including syndicators and tax credit attorneys active in Indiana.
- March-May 2017: IHCDA staff conducted 35 one-on-one meetings with interested partners. Each meeting was facilitated by IHCDA’s Deputy Executive Director/Chief Real Estate Development Officer, Rental

Housing Tax Credit Manager, Rental Housing Tax Credit Specialist, and an AmeriCorps VISTA member serving with IHCD to conduct QAP research.

- May 2017: IHCD began drafting the 2018/2019 QAP and released the first draft for public comments.

While IHCD believes that this model of extensive one-on-one meetings with developers in itself is noteworthy, one of the key elements of the new feedback process is a special activity that all partners are asked to complete at the end of the discussion. Each one-on-one meeting is scheduled for one hour. For about the first forty minutes, IHCD allows the developer to provide general feedback on the current QAP and their recommendations for the next QAP. Then in the last twenty minutes of the meeting, IHCD staff members lead an exercise. During this exercise, the developer is given a copy of the QAP along with a set of 3 green sticky dots, 3 yellow sticky dots, and 3 red sticky dots. The developer is instructed to place the 3 green dots next to items in the QAP that he/she wants IHCD to keep in the next QAP, to place the 3 yellow dots next to items that should be kept but need to be clarified or altered in some way, and the 3 red dots next to items that should be removed from the next QAP.

All developers put their stickers in the same copy of the QAP. Therefore, at the end of the 2017 one-on-one meeting process, IHCD had in its possession a hardcopy QAP that contained stickers placed by 35 different partners. This sticker process results in a quick way to identify trends, i.e. areas that the majority of our development partners want kept in the next QAP, clarified/amended in the next QAP, or removed in the next QAP. This document is used as a road map to begin drafting the new QAP. A sample photo of page from the QAP containing dots placed by developers is included as Appendix A.

Through the one-on-one meeting process described above, IHCD was able to alleviate the first two concerns identified in the background section above by (1) implementing a formal process for obtaining feedback prior to writing a draft QAP and (2) creating a feedback mechanism that gives each developer equal time to talk in a private setting as opposed to competing for time in a public hearing.

To address the final concern noted in the background section above, IHCD also changed the rewriting process by extending the drafting timeline to include more opportunities for feedback after release of a draft QAP. The process used now (after the completion of the one-on-one developer meetings) is as follows:

- IHCD releases the first draft of the new QAP. Developers are given a two-week written public comment period. During this two-week period, a public hearing is also held.
- IHCD reviews the feedback received and writes a second draft.
- IHCD releases the second draft of the new QAP. Developers are again given a two-week written public comment period and another public hearing is held during this time.
- IHCD reviews the feedback received and writes a final draft to be taken to the Board of Directors for approval and to the Governor's Office for signature.

This multiple draft process thus ensures that changes made after the first round of public comments can be vetted by the development community for accuracy and to ensure the changes are clearly written.

## Why Nominate for an NCSHA Award?

- Replicable: Other HFAs could implement this idea for their own QAP drafting process, and/or for the drafting process used for other program policies.
- Cost-Effective: The only cost incurred is staff time and the trivial financial cost of printing one hardcopy of the QAP and buying green, yellow, and red dot stickers. While IHCD did also incur travel costs from meeting many of the partners at their offices (which we saw as a sign of partnership as opposed to

making everyone come to us), another HFA wishing to replicate this process could avoid those travel costs if it hosted all meetings at the HFA office instead.

- **Innovative:** IHCDA is not aware of any other HFA that utilizes such a comprehensive method for obtaining feedback on its QAP or that has implemented similar facilitation methods.
- **Partnership Building:** This QAP rewriting process strengthens the partnerships between IHCDA and its tax credit developers by allowing more opportunities for feedback and emphasizing the importance that the agency places on listening to partners. In addition, this process gives developers additional one-on-one time with key IHCDA executive and management staff, building trust and rapport with the agency.

## Appendix A

Attached is a sample photo showing a page of the QAP with “dots” placed by developer partners.

