



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, 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.

The First 50 Years

Category: Communications

Subcategory: Annual Reports

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering. An interactive timeline takes readers through the past 50 years of affordable housing in Illinois.

HFA: Illinois Housing Development Authority

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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 year 2017 marked the Illinois Housing Development Authority's 50th anniversary, and as we entered our fifth decade of providing innovative housing finance, we had an exciting story to tell. IHDA was established in 1967 as a small agency with less than a dozen employees and very few assets. Over the intervening years, our mission became a bright reality as our agency grew to become a major generator of housing and a significant contributor to the economic development of Illinois. As the housing challenges facing Illinois changed, our agency evolved as well, launching new programs and taking on new responsibilities to meet the shifting needs of renters, homeowners, homebuyers, and local governments.

We wanted to share this story with our readers to celebrate our journey and demonstrate the impact our agency has made throughout the years. Accordingly, our Fiscal Year 2017 report – "[The First 50 Years](#)" – allows the reader to revisit some of the major milestones and achievements from our history as IHDA collaborated with developers, lenders, management companies, elected officials and others to find creative solutions to our most challenging housing issues.

Our Strategy:

From the beginning, IHDA has published an annual report each year with the goal of making information accessible and available in usable form for Illinois residents and our partners. This was done by providing a thorough accounting of the Authority's investments for the previous year, supplemented by a useful and informative narrative. These narratives described the primary housing challenges the state faced each year, the steps IHDA had taken to address them, and reviews of the year's accomplishments.

Including a helpful narrative to accompany financial highlights is not a new strategy for an annual report. However, as we reviewed our library and brainstormed ways to honor this anniversary, we realized we had a valuable resource at our fingertips that allowed us to try something new. Together, these narratives provided a complete and detailed account of our history, along with an amazing collection of photos of our developments, testimonials from IHDA renters, homebuyers and partners, and maps that charted our progress over the decades – from our modest beginning all the way to our 50th year.

The Communications team carefully reviewed the full archive of reports, highlighting key milestones and images from our history. With a detailed catalog of dates and photography selected, we worked with a web developer to create an interactive timeline that allows the reader to review our history, by decade, to learn about Illinois' housing challenges and victories over the years. Real photos of people we have assisted and properties we have financed accompany each item, putting a face on the programs to help our audience truly appreciate the achievements of the time. From our first securities issue to the launch of our first single-family purchase program to the Authority's first tax credit development, no victory (or outdated hairstyle) was overlooked.

Enhanced versions several features that proved to be successful in previous reports complemented the timeline. These include an introductory video, an interactive map illustrating IHDA's investment in any given county of the state, more detailed reporting, and an engaging narrative that describes our primary focus areas and the strategies employed to achieve our goals in Fiscal Year 2017. All of these features are presented in a way that not only celebrates our history, but also encourages a full understanding of the state's housing activities and achievements from 1967 all the way to 2017.

Reaching our Audience

The “First 50 Years” continues our practice of publishing our annual report in an all-digital format, which allows us to expand our reach considerably. The online report is designed to be read by a wider audience, to truly demonstrate how and why our programs have an impact, and to make information about our results even more accessible to our partners and interested citizens.

Before we moved to the digital report, IHDA printed and mailed 4,000 annual reports each year to our state legislature and housing partners throughout the state. It was expensive, time consuming, and required increasingly limited storage space in our office. Since the launch of our annual report website, we can simply email the URL to the Authority’s full contact list of 8,000 community partners, elected officials, government agencies, developers, investors, and others. The online format also lends itself to social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, helping us share report with a wider audience – Illinois families who could benefit from our programs but are not on our contact list of partners.

Finally, the report is supplemented by a printed one-page “FY2017 Snapshot” created as a handout for in-person meetings. It provides a quick summary of who we are, quickly lists the programmatic highlights from the past year, and encourages the reader to visit the online report for more information. The Snapshot has been an extremely helpful tool in our meetings with new partners, legislators, and local elected officials.

Effective use of Resources

The online format is far more cost effective in terms of both time and money. Publishing an online report allows us to reach our readers with immediacy while saving on printing and shipping costs. The online format also gave us the flexibility to create a timeline feature with relative ease – something that would have increased design and printing costs in a printed report. In addition, the digital template we created in 2014 for our first online report was designed to be easily updated in future years. As a result, the cost to build the timeline and publish the Fiscal Year 2017 report was considerably less than creating a new template from scratch. Most notably, we saved money we typically would have allocated towards photography by taking advantage of the images we already had in our library. The result is not only easier on the budget, but truly allows the results to come to life, drawing attention to our results while taking the reader on an engaging journey throughout IHDA’s history.

Conclusion

The response to Fiscal Year 2017 report and timeline has been overwhelmingly positive, and we have received a number of requests for copies of our vintage photos and imagery from board members, partners, and staff. The “First 50 Years” provides an engaging look at our agency’s history and valuable insight to the positive impact IHDA has made each year. More importantly, it delivers a powerful message to our partners and our state legislature. It reminds them that housing matters. And it reminds them that for 50 years, IHDA has been at the forefront of the state’s response to housing challenges large and small, developing new strategies and exploring new partnerships that continue to change lives and communities.

Visual Aids:

1. FY2017 Annual Report Website (visit www.ihdafy17.com)
2. [FY2017 IHDA Snapshot](#)