



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.

Rapid Results Initiative

Category: Management Innovation

Subcategory: Operations

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.
The Rapid Results Initiative teaches problem-solving methodologies while instilling
continuous culture improvements.

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.

Introduction

In 2015, the first-ever state employee survey was sent out seeking employees' ideas for improvements and savings. The results were eye opening. One of the responses that was consistently reiterated was both the need for greater efficiency, and an improved process to empower employees' creativity and innovation. IHDA began a transformation to re-think and re-work the methodologies behind the process of change agent facilitation. Under new executive leadership in 2016, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) established the Department of Operational Excellence to primarily focus on Rapid Results. The IHDA Rapid Results program has a mission of engaging employees throughout the organization to harness their ideas in delivering services easier, better, faster and cheaper with fewer resources. By fostering both proven and newly innovative methods, the Rapid Results Initiative gives employees the tools to express their ideas and identify processes for improving internal operations with increasing efficiency and lowering costs. The mission of the Rapid Results Initiative is to drive results and instill a culture of continuous improvement.

How 'The Need' Was Faced

Given the proven need for greater efficiency, and an improved process to empower employees and create real change, in 2017 IHDA launched its Rapid Results Initiative. With support from the Administration of Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, IHDA promoted a Rapid Results System to empower The Authority to remove obstacles to employee innovation and allow employees to personally change processes. 28 out of 55 state agencies are actively participating in some variation of Rapid Results. According to the Illinois Governor's Administration, IHDA ranks in the "Top 10" of trained staff, active projects, and implemented projects. Leading the Rapid Results Program at IHDA, the Department of Operational Excellence's goal is to cut the red tape and instill a culture of efficiency and accountability to advance IHDA's mission of creating and preserving affordable housing throughout Illinois. While introducing LEAN-type methodology into government is not unprecedented, IHDA's iteration chartered exclusively with existing head count and zero capital investment, and succeeded beyond expectations. With a single, dedicated department manager and a handful of cross-trained, part-time staff, Rapid Results brings a new focus to front-line processes with improvements that can be achieved quickly. The success stories below are a result of regulatory and operational changes occurring within IHDA to effect positive change.

Rapid Results de-emphasizes cost savings as the primary goal of the program. It aims to, in order: make work easier, better, faster, and cheaper. "Cheaper" is the last area of focus, as IHDA wants to make employees' daily workflow easier to navigate. This enables employees to focus on high-value aspects of their work and produce better results, faster. Making work easier, better, and faster inevitably leads to cost savings. This emphasis is recognized by employees, and greatly contributes to their buy-in of the program. The core of IHDA's Rapid Results Program involves working with leaders and teams to set and achieve aggressive goals in one or more key areas of performance. The initiative has enabled IHDA to tap into hidden reserves of capacity and energy to get the job done by taking action and testing assumptions.

IHDA's Rapid Results Program

In 2016, IHDA's Leadership Team participated in a 2-day Rapid Results training program. In March 2017, IHDA rolled out their own approach to engage all IHDA staff in this program. All employees were empowered to identify any current processes needing improvement. It is understood that the people doing the work in a department are the experts on the process, the pain points associated with it, and how best to improve it. This led to Rapid Results ideas being captured by staff on a formal submission form and all forms were posted in a common area known as "THE WALL." This form of visual management encourages IHDA staff to communicate their ideas on process improvement in an open forum.



IHDA has embraced a structured approach to training where collaborative teams of employees, supervisors, customers, and stakeholders learn the basics of continuous process improvement. This features identifying the problem, mapping a process from start to finish, tracking how a project is performing, identifying steps in a process that do not add value, and outlining goals. The Rapid Results problem solving methodology uses an A3 approach to report each completed project. The form includes the following key components:

- Problem Statement (define scope of project)
- Current State Value Stream Mapping (process flow/time)
- Diagnosis of Current State (going to GEMBA, where the work is done; gathering the voice of the customer; identifying any of the 8 wastes in the process and conducting root cause analysis of each of them)
- Future State Value Stream Mapping (process flow/time)
- Action Plan (steps to implement the future state)
- Follow Up (capturing success metrics)

In September 2017, IHDA launched an on-site, one-day Rapid Results training workshop. Five Rapid Results training workshops have been held at IHDA since this time and resulted in an additional 65 staff being trained on the Rapid Results problem solving methodology and tools. This total represents almost 30% of IHDA staff trained. IHDA executive management reviews all submissions to identify those ideas that are prime candidates for the Rapid Results approach to problem solving. From the inception of this approach in March 2017 until May 2018, the following totals reflect IHDA staff engagement: 119 ideas have been submitted to "THE WALL"; two-thirds of these submissions were approved to move forward using the Rapid Results approach; over 75% of the approved submissions were initiated via Rapid Results training workshops. Leaders of active Rapid Results projects attend monthly report-out sessions to share the status of their projects. This platform also addresses any repeated obstacles a project may be facing which prohibit project progress.

IHDA Rapid Results Success Projects

IHDA staff has successfully completed 20 projects in the past fiscal year. Current success metrics are as follows: total dollars saved = \$50,531/yr; legal expense: \$45,000; postage: \$1,267; supplies: \$4,284; hours saved = 7,363/yr.; equivalent to capacity of 3.5 FTE (or \$257,931/yr.)

- Ordering Home Funds - Condense Process between LPM & Treasury - Client Services found a segment within LPM/Treasury where we can consolidate the process to order Home Funds by eliminating a few steps, reduce down time, and delay in funding.
- Customer Service Google Map - Eliminate extra processing steps by providing option to select agency based on geo-location/google map.
- Pre-populated Management Occupancy Review Report – The Management Occupancy Report (MOR) is a manually intensive process. Automation will reduce excessive amount of time and energy spent manually populating static and variable data. The MOR will be populated with accurate static & variable data.
- Convertible Loan Documents – Creation of new loan documents to eliminate re-negotiating at the final close and the risk, time and cost of releasing and re-recording mortgages. (Pending pilot project)
Mortgage Credit Certification (MCC) Re-Issuance – Standardize forms across all historical/current MCC programs to simplify and streamline the MCC reissuance process and improve response time borrowers.
- Reserve Request Process Flow - By digitalizing forms, the review and verification process for Reserve Requests is more streamlined and can be more easily tracked. There are now fewer customer inquiries regarding status, and inquiries can be accurately answered within one business day.
- Financial Data Import Process - A streamlined process of importing financial data, including automated calculation fields and a more organized data field view, has saved time spent on Audit Reviews.
- Borrower and Sponsor Document Approval - A streamlined process of document approval has resulted in a reduced number of delayed closings and stronger relationships among IHDA staff, borrowers, and sponsors.
- Annual Compliance Notification - Locating specific information required for compliance was time consuming. With standardized entries, reports can be linked with common identifiers, reducing both research time and naming errors.

Continuous Improvement

These are just a handful of the hundreds of projects and processes that directors, managers and front-line staff were empowered to re-evaluate and re-tool. Their improvements are the first steps in creating much-needed transformation within IHDA. These eliminated hours aren't reductions in work; they provide opportunities to focus on additional work and productivity for the benefit of the Illinois taxpayer.

Transferability

The Rapid Result's Program may be replicated well beyond the borders of IHDA. Implementing any program across a government agency has its challenges, and that's what makes Rapid Results' rollout and success unique and applicable in other states and government bodies. If this adaptation is sustainable at IHDA, it can be implemented virtually anywhere.