

# Combating Homelessness with Avenues for Hope

**Idaho Housing and Finance Association**  
Communications: Integrated Campaign

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## Combating homelessness with Avenues for Hope

Combating homelessness and enhancing affordable housing opportunities is a growing challenge in the United States that requires a broad network of nonprofit service providers capable of responding to the unique needs of each community. With such a large number of nonprofits competing for a limited amount of federal dollars, finding other sources of funding is critical. With no state and local funding opportunities, the need to create more stable and diverse funding for homelessness and affordable housing services fell upon Idaho Housing and Finance Association. Our solution: Avenues for Hope, a program that has helped raise \$4.4 million for non-profits across Idaho over the last nine years, including \$1.3 million in 2019 alone (more than the state's annual federal award from the Emergency Solutions Grant program).

Through Idaho Housing's nonprofit entity, the Home Partnership Foundation, IHFA calls upon partners statewide to contribute to a coordinated, efficient, and intentional homelessness response. These partners- financial institutions, the real estate industry, local businesses, and charitable foundations- are key sources of funding for Avenues for Hope, a three-week [online fundraising campaign](#) held every December. The effort builds philanthropic networks that nonprofits would struggle to create on their own, enhancing resources for nonprofit service providers with housing-related missions throughout Idaho.

### Achieving Strategic Objectives

The Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge has helped diversify and stabilize critical funding for Idaho's housing service providers. It's heightened awareness and increased private funding for homelessness services and affordable housing options throughout Idaho. As Idaho's leader in homelessness response, Idaho Housing ensures that the new funding is used to strategically strengthen our statewide homeless services network.

Before the campaign was launched, many partners had limited social media presence, lacked online donation processing capabilities and typically didn't have the staffing or expertise to seek out new fundraising approaches. Thus, our first objective was to utilize IHFA's resources and expertise to supplement the lack of fundraising capacity among our non-profit partners. A secondary objective was to provide feedback and coaching to help our partners achieve better visibility and showcase the important work they're doing in their communities. This helped engage more staff members, volunteers, and board members in advancing the missions of these organizations. Nonprofit partners have expressed how they value the unique role and leadership IHFA provides to the nonprofit housing sector. Idaho Housing has been directly supporting efforts to prevent and combat homelessness by sustaining or enhancing resources for nearly 80 shelters and housing-service providers throughout Idaho and has distributed nearly \$4.4 million through the Avenues for Hope campaign. In addition to dollars raised, campaign success has spurred a statewide annual homelessness report, media coverage on homelessness and local non-profits, local funding authorizations for housing projects, and

partnerships resulting in the development of new permanent supportive housing for homeless persons.

## Achieve Measurable Results

Since inception in 2011, the Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge has grown quickly, increasing community donations, corporate sponsorships and nonprofit beneficiaries. In 2019, the campaign topped the \$1 million mark for the first time, raising \$1.3 million.

The cumulative benefits of the campaign include:

- \$4.4 million awarded to support critical housing programs and services.
- Financial diversification for nearly 80 nonprofit providers.
- Involvement of 40 sponsors.
- Thousands of homeless served.

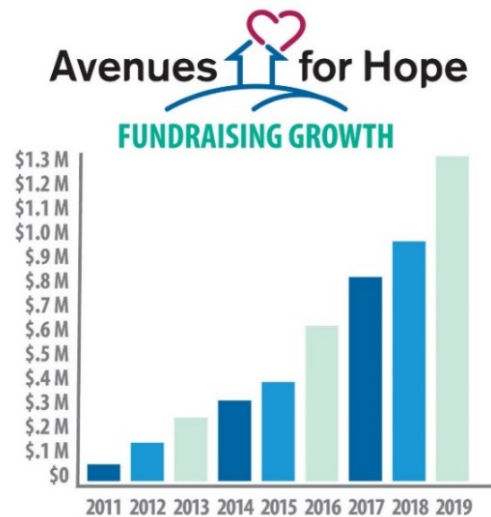
The results are indisputable. Each year, results exceed not only the prior year's total proceeds, but also the fundraising goal set for that campaign year. For a state with small federal awards and no state-level funding, Avenues for Hope's results are making a long and lasting impact.

## Engage Targeted Audiences

The campaign uses a number of different channels to draw awareness. It provides nonprofit participants the software platform, the [social media tools](#) and [advertising materials](#), the video promotions and features, along with valuable [financial incentives](#) to stimulate philanthropic giving which is an innovative and game-changing step to build broader community support. These tools helped drive the 2019 campaign to record heights. We saw a record number of donations made through Facebook, which highlights the effectiveness of peer-to-peer fundraising. We also offered more [video content](#) than prior years, helping share the stories of the nonprofits this campaign helped, along with some perspective from our partners on why Avenues for Hope was such a good fit for them.

## Benefits that Outweigh Costs and Effectively Use Resources

Many partners make this campaign possible. The nonprofit participants, the technology vendor, the corporate sponsors, community leaders, local media, thousands of donors, and the Idaho Housing team that helps manage the campaign all have an important role in effectively raising



funds. Unlike traditional fundraising events, such as in-person galas or golf tournaments, the online nature of the donation platform makes it easy for partners statewide to participate and promote this opportunity to their constituents. The online campaign not only receives donations from Idaho, but all across the United States with 22 percent coming from 46 states. Avenues for Hope not only raises awareness of the funding needs, but also provides an opportunity for nonprofits to share stories of the important housing services they provide in their community.

According to Giving USA, a third of all online giving occurs in December, with 22 percent occurring in the last two days of the year. The Avenues for Hope campaign was designed to take advantage of this trend and runs every year during the month of December. Last year, \$1,321,394 was raised through donations, challenge grants and sponsorship funds. More than 4,000 gifts were made totaling \$1,021,152 during the three-week campaign through an easy to use, [online donation platform](#). All proceeds directly support the nonprofit designated by each donor. In addition, campaign sponsors and Idaho Housing provide the funding for 272 prizes and matching funds which amounted to \$300,242 in 2019, or 29 percent of the total funds awarded to participating nonprofits.

There is no charge to participating nonprofits as the administration, technology and marketing expenses are covered by Idaho Housing. The software platform costs Idaho Housing less than \$4,000 per year. Video production and graphic work are handled internally. Staff volunteerism also plays a critical role. Proceeds are unrestricted for the nonprofits to use allowing them to build operational capacity and help meet the greatest housing needs of their community. The visibility of this campaign also raised general awareness of housing needs. For \$4,000 in hard costs, IHFA and its partners generated over \$1.3 million for homelessness and affordable housing programs, broadened Idaho's non-profit donor network, and increased homelessness and affordable housing needs among Idahoans.

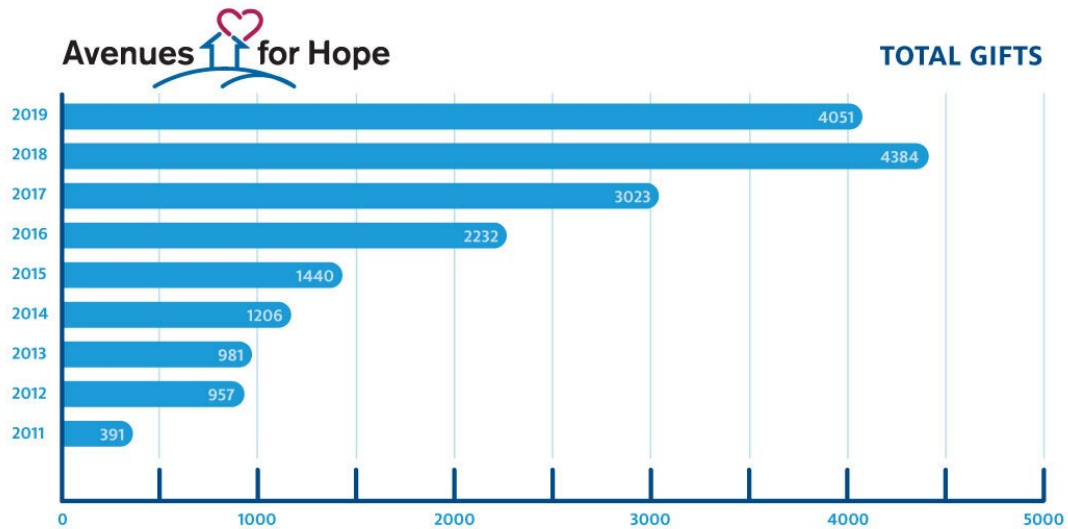
## **Program is replicable**

Idaho Housing invested in a software service provider to create a dedicated website for the Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge. The technology behind Avenues for Hope allows participating nonprofits to track donations, matching funds and prizes on a real-time leaderboard as well as have a uniquely branded, secure donation site for its organization. Donations are deposited directly into their bank accounts so they can be put to immediate use in their community.

This campaign is replicable through the online fundraising platform that can be customized for various types of online fundraising campaigns. Idaho Housing created the branding for the campaign, as well as training and a tool kit that includes rules, questions and answers, graphics, posters, flyers, and sample messaging for emails and social media posts, that can serve as a model for other campaigns.

## Visual Aids

Number of total gifts awarded to nonprofits during each year of the Avenues for Hope campaign. Although the total number of gifts decreased in 2019, the average size of gifts increased, causing an increase of 48% in total proceeds over 2018 results.



Post-campaign check presentation with nonprofits and sponsors enables everyone to get together to celebrate as well as share best practices



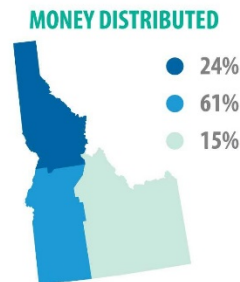
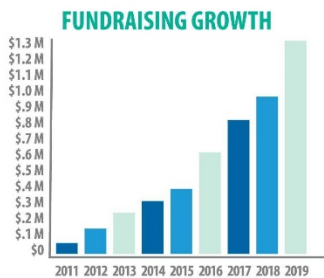




Avenues  for Hope  
 Housing Challenge

# \$4.4 Million

**Raised to prevent homelessness since 2011!**



**GET INVOLVED**

Visit [AvenuesforHope.org](http://AvenuesforHope.org)  
 Look for us on social media.



**FUNDING SOURCES**  
 since 2011

- Individual donations (\$2,886,114)
- Grants and match funds (\$1,508,261)

**PRESENTED BY**

**HomePartnership  
 Foundation**

A 501(c)(3) brought to you by Idaho Housing and Finance Association to help people build a strong foundation for their lives through stable, safe, and affordable housing.

Avenues for Hope  
 Housing Challenge

# \$1,321,394

A record amount raised in 2019 for 73 nonprofits!



**Thank you sponsors!**

**PLATINUM SPONSORS**

