

# Using IHDA Stories to Highlight Our Mission

## **Illinois Housing Development Authority**

Communications: Annual Reports

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**Overview:**

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) for years has used personal quotes and written testimonials from individuals and families to accompany the financial highlights in our annual reports. While no longer inventive on their own, these real stories help to create a narrative that provides valuable context to the Authority's activities and investments over the previous fiscal year. More importantly, they truly demonstrate the results and accomplishments of the state's housing initiatives rather than simply listing their objectives or numeric values.

IHDA's goal in 2018 was to share these results with an increasingly important audience – our state legislators and partners in local government. Our aim was to tell a great story that makes these stakeholders feel informed, engaged and connected to our work. As the scope of our programs has expanded over the years to address an ever-growing range housing needs, the challenge was to tell a story that represented the ever-expanding scope of our work in an easy to synthesize format. As we began our outreach, we quickly realized that nobody is better equipped to tell that story than our renters, homebuyers, homeowners and partners themselves. For that reason, IHDA's [Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report](#) is an interactive report that features videos and stories that allow readers (and viewers) to hear directly from Illinois residents as they highlight IHDA's mission in action in their own words and celebrating individual successes emphasize the importance of the state's housing investments and initiatives.

**Our Mission in Action:**

Beginning in 2018, IHDA's Communications team had launched a proactive effort to identify and reach out to households and partners that have accessed IHDA programs and resources. Through local outreach, surveys, and improved customer feedback tools, we quickly connected with individuals and families whose stories represent the breadth of IHDA's primary offerings in the past year and scheduled video interviews to learn more about the impact of IHDA's programs. As we met our customers, we were pleasantly surprised that most of these individuals had something in common – they were eager to share their stories to educate their friends, neighbors and legislators on the effects that IHDA's investments have on lives across the state. The result was a series of stories that demonstrate how investments in housing affects individuals, businesses, and entire communities.

Together, these videos created a personal narrative of IHDA's mission in action over the previous fiscal year, putting the focus back on the individual and reminding our state legislature of the difference IHDA's programming makes in the lives of their constituents. These stories don't scream about the benefits of the programs they accessed. In every case, their personal accounts subtly illustrate them, describing the problem solved or the opportunity realized and allowing the audience to draw their own conclusions. We encouraged our participants to speak for themselves, in their own words, explaining their real life circumstances that could translate to individuals throughout the state. By putting a human face on the work of our agency, we remind our target audience of not only what our mission is and how we achieve it, but also why we do it.

**Design:**

We wanted to present these videos in a user-friendly platform and made several design updates to our existing annual report website template to ensure readers and viewers can easily absorb our message. These updates included an intuitive configuration of six internally produced videos, rotating pull quotes,

and written blurbs accompanying every video to tie each personal story to back to our primary focus areas and the strategies used to achieve our goals in FY2018.

Several other useful design and communications elements were included to complement the collection of videos. These include an introductory video montage in the report header, a brief introduction summarizing our financial year in review, colorful infographics that illustrate key data points, and an interactive map that allows the user to hover and view IHDA's investment by program – in units and dollars – for any of Illinois' 102 counties. All of these elements combine to make a versatile and informative piece of storytelling that shares our mission and takes our audience on a tour of our work in the past year.

**Reaching Our Audience:**

It has been a priority in the past year to expand our external and legislative outreach to increase the footprint of our programs. IHDA's Communications and outreach staff have been proactively meeting with state senators, representatives, mayors, managers and community development staff to educate and inform at the local level. Our meetings have shown that in many cases, even when officials are familiar with IHDA, they do not realize the scope of our services and how they influences the lives of households in their town or district. By sharing videos of real IHDA-assisted households sharing their stories, our target audience is able to visit homes and communities across the state to see the human results of IHDA's programming in their districts.

A one-page "FY2018 Snapshot" created as a handout for in-person meetings also supplements the online report. 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 as the Authority has expanded its efforts to meet state legislators, mayors, village managers and community development staff to help them understand how IHDA's programs and developments operate, who they serve, and how they can they can benefit their constituents.

Finally, this report continues our practice of publishing our annual report in an online format, which allows us to expand our reach considerably compared to a printed document while still satisfying our agency's reporting mandate. The online report is designed to be read by a wide audience, to 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.

**Effective Use of Resources:**

IHDA's Communication team filmed, edited and produced each video in-house, which meant the design and development costs off our online annual report were modest – limited to minor design updates in order to accommodate a video focus. The result was not only easier on the budget, but truly allowed the results to come to life, drawing attention to the stories created by our investments as well as our financials. The videos and graphics can also be singled out and repurposed depending on the specific situation, giving us a ready-made library of stats, images, and videos that can be used to advocate for and promote our programs.

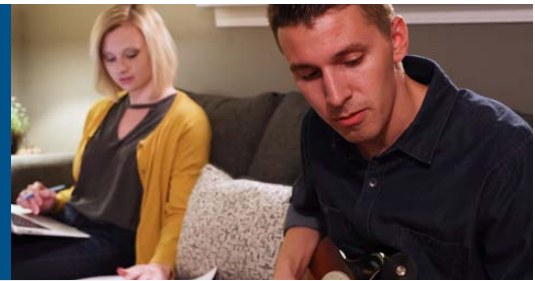
**Conclusion:**

Illinois Housing Development Authority  
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Communications – Annual Report

The response to IHDA's Fiscal Year 2018 annual report from partners and staff has been predominantly positive. The report was built around a simple but effective concept: by allowing our results literally speak for themselves, we are able to clearly and effectively demonstrate to elected officials how IHDA programs and resources can benefit constituents in their district. The result was a summary of the year that provides our information in a cohesive way to our target audience, offering a holistic view of how we serve Illinois.

**Visual Aids:**

1. FY2018 Annual Report Website (visit [ihdafy18.com](http://ihdafy18.com))
2. FY2018 IHDA Snapshot



# “Mission Driven Impact Throughout Illinois”

## ANNUAL REPORT - FISCAL YEAR 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) finances the creation and preservation of affordable housing throughout Illinois. In FY2018, IHDA invested **\$1.1 billion** in more than **8,400 units** of affordable housing, generating **\$619 million** for Illinois’ economy, creating **7,300 jobs** and helping families find quality, affordable housing throughout the state. View the complete annual report at [www.IHDAFY18.com](http://www.IHDAFY18.com).

## Financing the Creation and Preservation of Affordable Housing in Illinois.

### HOMEOWNERSHIP

IHDA’s network of participating lenders, **\$743 MILLION** in loans were made to **5,500 FAMILIES**, generating **2,700 JOBS** and infusing **\$144 MILLION** into Illinois economy.

### RENTAL HOUSING

IHDA invested **\$332 MILLION** and leveraged **\$461 MILLION** to build to build or preserve **2,944** affordable units in 36 developments.

### FINANCIAL

In addition to Moody’s upgrading the rating on the Homeowner Mortgage Revenue Bonds Indenture to Aa2, the Authority successfully maintained a strong issuer credit rating of **A1, AA-, and AA-** from Moody’s Investors Service, Standard & Poor’s, and Fitch Ratings, respectively. The Authority also issued **\$140 million** of bonds and notes over a variety of single family and multifamily issuances and risk share programs.



## LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES

As an independent, self-supporting agency, IHDA administers a number of local, state and federal resources and issue bonds based on our own strong credit rating. Our programs allow families to buy and maintain affordable homes and our investments result in quality rental developments that generate jobs and dollars for the state's economy.



## STATE/COUNTY

- Abandoned Properties Program
- Affordable Housing Tax Credits
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Cook County Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program
- Foreclosure Prevention Program
- Foreclosure Prevention Program Graduated Fund
- Rental Housing Support Program

## FEDERAL

- Hardest Hit Funds
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits
- Mortgage Credit Certificates
- National Housing Trust Fund Program
- 811 Rental Assistance
- NSP 1 & 3

## ABOUT IHDA

*IHDA was created by state legislature in 1967 as a self-supporting agency to finance affordable housing across Illinois.*

*Since creation, IHDA has invested \$19 billion in the creation or preservation of more than 264,000 units of affordable housing for the people of Illinois.*