

Revitalizing Whole Communities

Illinois Housing Development Authority

Special Achievement

HFA Staff Contact

Max Mueller

mmueller@ihda.org

Overview

Community revitalization plays a critical role in ensuring the health and success of communities of all sizes. These local efforts that increase access to living wage jobs, education, transportation, and other amenities are essential in creating opportunity and choice for Illinois households. In addition to its dense urban centers, Illinois is home to multitudes of less-populated rural communities. Traditionally, the prime target areas for community revitalization have been areas designated as Qualified Census Tracts and Racially/Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty, or areas demonstrating demographic and economic vulnerabilities. However, through its relationships with developers, local elected officials, and planning organizations working in small, rural communities, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) recognized that capacity in such areas can be limited. Despite their need for housing investments, small and/or rural communities across Illinois often lack the resources to create and implement community revitalization efforts and capitalize on their benefits.

In response to this need, IHDA launched an initiative to incentivize Community Revitalization planning via its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), provide detailed and transparent scoring criteria for this incentive, and develop a statewide Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program (TA Program) that encourages affordable housing development and planning in the state's most distressed areas. The program, which is free of charge, forms partnerships to build upon and link to existing planning efforts, identifies strengths and needs within the community, and generates localized capacity via a formal Community Revitalization Strategy (CRS) process. Within a span of just three years, the program has grown to feature a Community Revitalization team that works free of charge, linking communities with official planning initiatives and providing direct technical assistance to smaller and rural communities across Illinois.

Laying the Foundation

IHDA established a Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) phase in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) process in 2008, and in 2012 built in significant data and market reviews to proactively assess the market need for development and redevelopment proposals prior to the submittal of a full application. The pre-assessment is the only place in the LIHTC process during which IHDA can provide feedback, allowing them to evaluate local market data to examine concentrations of poverty and affordable housing as preliminary indicators of "need" for revitalization. As the PPA evolved, IHDA allowed developers to include additional documentation that supported the need for affordable housing and demonstrated local development efforts in their submissions, such as local community plans. In this way, the PPA allows IHDA to look beyond the data alone to determine whether investments in over-concentrated or otherwise "difficult" markets could actually help increase access to living wage jobs, education, services, and transit for low-income residents.

To ensure that it was identifying the best and most appropriate areas for investment (i.e. not only areas with low concentrations of poverty), IHDA began to provide scoring incentives for developments that contribute to larger revitalization efforts in their community. In order to score in this area, developers' CRS documentation must be relatively current and active, and should address realistic implementation, specific timelines, and budgeting benchmarks. Acceptable planning documents include, but are not limited to, comprehensive plans, land bank authority plans, transit-oriented development plans, inter-jurisdictional plans, and evidence of other local plans and revitalization efforts. Importantly, the CRS must always consider affordable housing and evidence of economic development integration.

The Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program

With the scoring incentive established in the QAP, IHDA took the initiative to expand the planning

capacity of underserved communities in downstate/rural Illinois to create, preserve, and access affordable housing by launching the Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program. Under the TA Program, a team of Community Revitalization Planning Specialists proactively contacts communities of need to form partnerships and expand local planning capacity via a formal CRS process. Although available to communities statewide, because of the capacity limitations and needs shared between rural communities and urban areas outside the Chicago metro area, IHDA primarily targets communities in these areas for undertaking community revitalization partnerships.

The partnerships that stem from the TA Program benefit communities by building strategies that encompass housing, community, and economic development, and mitigating barriers of access to housing development tools. Primarily, the program's technical assistance helps expand local leaders' ability to see affordable housing as part of their community's potential growth, and assists them with incorporating a variety of these opportunities in their planning. Housing developers also benefit from these activities, as the plans developed in conjunction with IHDA's TA Program provide a better understanding of communities' housing needs and accessing appropriate resources. Additionally, investors are better able to connect to and utilize the market analysis tools and funding sources identified by the program's resulting plans and strategies.

Program Outcomes and Results

Demand for the Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program began immediately upon the announcement of the corresponding scoring incentive in the QAP. Results have primarily appeared in the form of new partnerships and increased rural planning capacity, which in turn has influenced the quantity and strength of various funding applications IHDA receives from assisted communities:

Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program

As of 2019, 142 projects in 98 unique communities throughout the state have received technical assistance via the TA Program. These partnerships, made official through a signed Scope of Work, will result in a formal planning document that provides recommendations and guidance for integrating affordable housing investments within larger community revitalization efforts. These processes both reduce barriers for communities to plan for and access housing resources and funding, and produce formal community-driven documentation that can serve as a basis for broader planning efforts to seek additional development investments.

Moreover, the Community Revitalization team has served/is currently serving on 13 advisory groups that allow IHDA to provide partners and other statewide and regional organizations with community revitalization guidance. Likewise, the team has conducted general outreach by presenting its programming at 10 separate conferences. Finally, the team has held more than 200 meetings with developers and communities since the beginning of the program in 2016.

Downstate and Rural Capacity-Building

Within its Community Revitalization programming, IHDA has seen the greatest engagement with and impact on downstate and rural communities. Downstate/rural areas comprise less than 35% of Illinois' total population, however, 47% of projects receiving the Community Revitalization Program's technical assistance have been located in these areas. Of the 22 projects/communities that are currently in the pipeline for engaging a full-scale Community Revitalization partnership, 72% are located in downstate/rural Illinois. Of these, 4 communities to date have signed Scopes of Work to officially begin the program's active and ongoing planning efforts.

To further this capacity building, IHDA is currently building a publicly accessible “Community Revitalization Network Map” that will track various revitalization planning efforts and activities throughout the state to aid communities in building relationships and networking with developers and service providers. In addition, a “Community Revitalization Advisory Group,” comprised of experts and service providers outside of IHDA, is being formed that will be responsible for fostering increased access to development resources in underserved communities. Finally, IHDA’s Community Revitalization team has created a library of documents and resources that communities can use during any planning process to assess their needs and understand Community Revitalization both within and outside of IHDA’s QAP. These tools and resources are fully utilized within official program partnerships, but are also available to the public on IHDA’s Community Revitalization website:

- Technical Assistance Request Form
- Community Revitalization FAQ
- Community Revitalization Planning Checklist
- Scope of Work Agreement
- Community Planning Stakeholder List
- Community Needs Assessment Survey
- Meeting Facilitation Activities
- Housing Stock Survey
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Work Plan and Timeline
- Planning and Funding Resources

Community Revitalization in IHDA’s QAP (LIHTC)

The TA Program has significantly affected the quantity and strength of LIHTC applications submitted from low-capacity communities (see attached Table 1). In the past four LIHTC funding rounds under which Community Revitalization was a scoring category, IHDA has seen considerable growth in the number of projects submitting planning documentation, increasing from 10 applicants in the first round of 2016 to 26 applicants in the 2018 round. Overall, the share of full applications with Community Revitalization scoring has increased from 35% (2016 Round I) to 46% (2018 Round). In addition, awards made to projects with Community Revitalization has increased considerably, growing from 27% in 2016 (Round I) to 54% in 2018.

Applications for the 2019 LIHTC round were due in February of 2019. Out of the 57 applications received, 49% submitted CRS. Of these applicants, 64% engaged IHDA’s technical assistance for their CRS submission. Of the applications for developments in downstate/rural Illinois, over 41% submitted CRSs.

Conclusion

The Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Program has quickly resulted in more fully realized LIHTC applications that integrate within broader community planning efforts to address local needs, enabling IHDA to assist the large swaths of the state that need affordable housing but lack the capacity to develop the desired units. The resources and guidance provided by the program offer significant benefits to communities by determining actual needs regarding housing and community development, providing assistance in planning to meet those needs, and offering incentives that attract developers and investors to formerly difficult markets. IHDA’s Community Revitalization programming has worked to break down silos between disparate agencies and organizations to allow state government to better serve all the people of Illinois, reduce duplication of efforts across agencies, and more efficiently finance the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the state of Illinois.

Supporting Visual Aids:

1. Table 1
2. Community Revitalization Overview
3. Community Revitalization FAQ
4. Scope of Work
5. Community Needs Assessment Survey

Table 1: Low Income Housing Tax Credit Community Revitalization Plans (all set-asides)

<i>LIHTC Rounds</i>	<i>Full Applications Submitted</i>	<i>Full Applications with Community Revitalization</i>	<i>LIHTC Allocations Awarded</i>	<i>Awardees with Community Revitalization</i>	<i>Awardees that received CR TA</i>
<i>2016 Round I</i>	29	10	11	3	-
<i>2016 Round II</i>	36	19	12	4	-
<i>2017 Round</i>	58	25	20	6	3
<i>2018 Round</i>	57	26	26	14	11
<i>2019 Round</i>	57	28	TBD	TBD	TBD

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

A community revitalization strategy is a deliberate, concerted, and locally approved plan or documented interconnected series of local efforts with local stakeholder support intended to improve and enhance specific aspects of a community or neighborhood. While community revitalization can look very different between communities, these strategies often target an area that is larger than a parcel, PUD, or subdivision, but small enough that one municipality or county (or a small conglomerate of municipalities or counties) can have jurisdiction over it.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION CAN MEAN:

- 🏠 Economic Development
 - 🏠 Downtown or target-area revitalization
 - 🏠 Business development
 - 🏠 Economic development – growing employers and jobs
 - 🏠 Improvements in infrastructure
 - 🏠 Improvement in services and amenities (health, education, shopping, etc.)

- 🏠 Housing Development
 - 🏠 Improvement in housing stock
 - 🏠 Infill housing/reduction in vacant lots
 - 🏠 Rehabilitation of dilapidated properties

- 🏠 Community Development
 - 🏠 Increase in community meetings/neighborhood organization
 - 🏠 Increase in public safety
 - 🏠 Increase in transportation options and access
 - 🏠 Increase in walkability
 - 🏠 Improvement in recreational opportunities
 - 🏠 Natural resource protection
 - 🏠 Community gardens
 - 🏠 Environmental planning and initiatives
 - 🏠 Improvement in stormwater management

...and can/should involve:

Local citizens
Neighborhood boards and groups
Nonprofit agencies
Local businesses
Educational institutions
Service-providing agencies and individuals
Governmental representatives and agencies



WHAT ROLE DOES COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAY AT IHDA?

Community revitalization plays a prominent role in ensuring the health and success of Illinois communities, and therefore, IHDA is a strong proponent of these processes. Taking an active approach to community revitalization planning can also play a critical role in helping communities qualify for assistance and investment through a variety of agencies. In addition to Community Revitalization serving as a **10-point category on IHDA's Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) application**, IHDA also implements a range of grants and programs **designed to meet communities' revitalization needs that are available to nonprofits and units of local government:**

- 🏠 Abandoned Property Program
- 🏠 Blight Reduction Program
- 🏠 Single Family Rehabilitation Program
- 🏠 Land Bank Capacity Program and Technical Assistance Network
- 🏠 Home Accessibility Program
- 🏠 Foreclosure Prevention Program
- 🏠 Housing Tax Credits
- 🏠 Homeownership Programs

WHAT CAN IHDA OFFER YOU

IHDA employs two full-time Community Revitalization Planning Specialists (CRPSs) who are available to work with you and your community to discuss your current or desired plans for promoting revitalization and development in your community. Regardless of where you are in **the process of community revitalization, IHDA's CRPSs can provide technical assistance to you** in the following ways:

- 🏠 Economic Development
- 🏠 Understand the guidelines for preparing Community Revitalization Strategies on your Low Income Housing Tax Credit application
- 🏠 Coordinate with other state, regional, and federal agencies who may be able to meet **your community's needs**
- 🏠 Strategically plan for future tax credit development sites
- 🏠 Gain expertise regarding housing development, planning processes, and utilizing governmental resources
- 🏠 Connect to market analysis tools that help communities understand and predict trends in their areas, particularly related to housing
- 🏠 Begin the process of intergovernmental/multi-jurisdictional coordination and planning
- 🏠 Strategize future planning and investment in your community

REACH OUT TO A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLANNING SPECIALIST

Amy Bashiti
ABashiti@ihda.org
312-836-7438

Emily Mueller
EMueller@ihda.org
312-836-7460



COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Note: This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about IHDA's Community Revitalization Strategy Process including technical assistance, and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Application and Scoring. This FAQ sheet is meant to serve as a general guide and may be updated from time to time. Please reach out to IHDA's Community Revitalization team at revitalization@ihda.org with additional questions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW.....2

- Q1. WHAT IS COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?
- Q2. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?
- Q3. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY?
- Q4. HOW CAN A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY BENEFIT AN APPLICATION FOR LIHTC FUNDING?
- Q5. WHO CAN/SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY PROCESS?
- Q6. WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES?

IHDA'S ROLE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.....3

- Q7. WHY IS IHDA INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?
- Q8. WHAT ROLE DOES COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAY AT IHDA?
- Q9. WHAT DOES IHDA COMMIT TO?
- Q10. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLANNING SPECIALIST (CRPS)?
- Q10. WHO CAN RECEIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?
- Q12. HOW IS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED?
- Q13. HOW LONG WILL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN?

FAQ FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.....4

- Q14. WHAT ARE OTHER GRANTS AND PROGRAMS THAT IHDA OFFERS TO HELP REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES?
- Q15. IS FUNDING FOR OTHER IHDA GRANTS AND PROGRAMS GUARANTEED IF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN?
- Q16. WHAT TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?
- Q17. WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS/COMMUNITIES RECEIVING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

FAQ FOR HOUSING DEVELOPERS.....5

- Q18. WHAT TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN TO HOUSING DEVELOPERS?
- Q19. WHEN SHOULD DEVELOPERS CONTACT IHDA IF THEIR SUBJECT PROPERTY FALLS WITHIN A QCT OR R/ECAP?
- Q20. HOW SHOULD DEVELOPERS PREPARE TO SUBMIT A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY TO IHDA?
- Q21. HOW SHOULD DEVELOPERS SUBMIT THEIR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY TO IHDA?
- Q22. *WHAT ARE THE BASIC PLAN COMPONENTS?
- Q23. *WHAT ARE THE SCORING COMPONENTS?

LIHTC APPLICATION DEFINITIONS.....6

- Q24. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A "COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD"?
- Q25. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS "AFFORDABLE HOUSING"?
- Q26. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A "PLAN"?
- Q27. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A "SUBJECT PROPERTY (IES)"?
- Q28. WHO NEEDS TO MEET THE MINIMUM THRESHOLDS FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES?
- Q29. WHAT IS A QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACT (QCT)?
- Q30. WHAT IS A RACIALLY/ETHNICALLY CONCENTRATED AREAS OF POVERTY (R/ECAP)?

Program Overview

Q1. WHAT IS COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?

Community Revitalization is the implementation of intentional efforts that are likely to lead to measurable increases in access to employment, living wage jobs, healthcare, supportive services, community amenities, transportation, quality and affordable housing stock.

Q2. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?

i. Economic Development

- Downtown or target-area revitalization
- Business development
- Economic development – growing employers and jobs
- Improvements in infrastructure
- Improvement in services and amenities (health, education, shopping, etc.)

ii. Housing Development

- Improvement in housing stock
- Infill housing/reduction in vacant lots
- Rehabilitation of dilapidated properties

iii. Community Development

- Increase in community meetings/neighborhood organization
- Increase in public safety
- Increase in transportation options and access
- Increase in walkability
- Improvement in recreational opportunities
- Natural resource protection
- Community gardens
- Environmental planning and initiatives
- Improvement in stormwater management

Q3. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY?

A Community Revitalization Strategy is a deliberate, concerted, and locally approved plan or documented interconnected series of local efforts with local stakeholder support intended to improve and enhance specific aspects of a community or neighborhood. While community revitalization can look very different between communities, these strategies often target an area that is larger than a parcel, Planned Unit Development (PUD), or subdivision, but small enough that one municipality or county (or a small conglomerate of municipalities or counties) can have jurisdiction over it.

Q4. HOW CAN A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY BENEFIT AN APPLICATION FOR LIHTC FUNDING?

Preserving the balance of affordable housing in Opportunity Areas as well as in distressed community areas, allowing the greatest amount of choice for low-income households to access quality housing, is an important goal of the QAP. Community Revitalization Strategies that are likely to lead to measurable increases in the following are eligible for up to ten (10) points.

- Access to employment and living wage jobs;
- Access to healthcare and supportive services;
- Access to a range of community amenities, including (but not limited to) parks, schools, groceries, businesses, and retail locations;
- Access to transportation;

- Improvement in the quality of housing stock; and
- Affordable housing opportunities

To be eligible for up to ten (10) points in this category, projects cannot receive points in the Opportunity Area Section, and must meet the Community Revitalization Strategy component thresholds.

Q5. WHO CAN/SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY PROCESS?

A strong Community Revitalization Strategy will provide guidance for the community to follow, to bring about its vision over the long term, and should include input from local residents, neighborhood boards and groups, nonprofit agencies, local businesses, educational institutions, service agencies, and other local stakeholders.

Q6. WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES?

IHDA's intended outcome is to help communities throughout the state of Illinois create a Community Revitalization Strategy that can accomplish the following:

- Initiate proactive community planning
- Strategize future planning and investment
- Establish linkages to ongoing initiatives
- Identify realistic housing needs and goals for the community
- Identify potential funding sources for plan implementation
- Identify financially feasible models for meeting housing needs
- Attract investors to community
- Form a working advisory group
- Strategically plan for future tax credit development sites

IHDA's Role and Technical Assistance

Q7. WHY IS IHDA INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION?

Community revitalization plays a prominent role in ensuring the health and success of Illinois communities, and therefore, IHDA is a strong proponent of these processes.

Q8. WHAT ROLE DOES COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAY AT IHDA?

IHDA is committed to expanding the capacity of underserved communities in Illinois to identify local housing needs and to empower those communities to take steps to meet those needs. By providing Community Revitalization strategies and technical assistance to communities, IHDA believes that it will be increasing capacity on multiple fronts. Primarily, it will be contributing to the expansion of local leaders' capacity to see Affordable Housing as part of their community's growth, and to include a variety of such opportunities in their plans. Housing developers will also benefit from this activity, as the plans developed by or in conjunction with IHDA's Community Revitalization Strategies technical assistance will help to provide a clearer path through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit process. Investors will be able to connect to and potentially utilize the market analysis tools and funding sources identified by the strategy.

IHDA also implements a range of grants and programs designed to meet communities' revitalization needs that are available to nonprofits and units of local government. For more information on this, please see questions 14-17 below.

Q9. WHAT DOES IHDA COMMIT TO?

- Strategize future planning and investment
- Establish linkages to ongoing initiatives for Economic Development, Education, Health Care, Food Access, etc.
- Identify realistic housing needs and goals for the community
- Coordinate with state, regional, and federal agencies, as well as local organizations, to help meet the planning and implementation needs of the community
- Identify potential funding sources for plan implementation
- Identify financially feasible models for meeting housing needs (to be enacted locally)
- Become a calling card for the community to attract investors
- Form a working advisory group to supervise ongoing implementation of planning strategies
- Strategically plan for future tax credit development sites (if housing needs analysis and financial feasibility planning indicate this as a viable outcome)

Q10. WHO CAN RECEIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

Technical assistance is given to local governments/communities and housing developers interested in promoting revitalization and development in their community. Any community located in Illinois is eligible for this service.

Q11. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLANNING SPECIALIST (CRPS)?

IHDA's Community Revitalization Planning Specialists (CRPSs) work with communities and housing developers to discuss current or desired plans for promoting revitalization and development in their communities. Regardless of where you are in the process of community revitalization, IHDA's CRPSs can provide technical assistance to you.

Q12. HOW IS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED?

Technical assistance is requested by visiting or IHDA webpage and submitting a [Community Revitalization Technical Assistance Intake Form](#) or emailing a [paper version](#) of the form to revitalization@ihda.org.

Q13. HOW LONG WILL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN?

Technical assistance may be given as long as the community and IHDA deem necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives agreed upon as part of the scope of work.

FAQ for Local Governments

Q14. WHAT ARE OTHER GRANTS AND PROGRAMS THAT IHDA OFFERS TO HELP REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES?

IHDA implements a range of grants and programs designed to meet communities' revitalization needs that are available to non-profits and units of local government:

- Abandoned Property Program
- Blight Reduction Program
- Single Family Rehabilitation Program
- Land Bank Capacity Program and Technical Assistance Network

- Home Accessibility Program
- Foreclosure Prevention Program
- Housing Tax Credits
- Homeownership programs
- Downpayment assistance programs

Q15. IS FUNDING FOR OTHER IHDA GRANTS AND PROGRAMS GUARANTEED IF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN?

Although IHDA is committed to helping communities identify potential funding sources for strategy implementation, there is no commitment of funding.

Q16. WHAT TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

IHDA's CRPSs can provide technical assistance to you in the following ways:

- Coordinate with other state, regional, and federal agencies who may be able to meet your community's needs
- Gain expertise regarding housing development, planning processes, and utilizing governmental resources
- Connect to market analysis tools that help communities understand and predict trends in their areas, particularly related to housing
- Begin the process of intergovernmental/multi-jurisdictional coordination and planning
- Strategize future planning and investment in your community
- Generate a toolbox for the community to initiate a community revitalization strategy locally
- Conduct a housing needs assessment for the community

Q17. WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS/COMMUNITIES RECEIVING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

- Identify a local point-person who will be responsible for collecting input from stakeholders, organizing meetings, assigning tasks to working group, and overseeing work plan
- Provide identification of and outreach to critical local stakeholders and local "champions"
- Provide identification of and outreach to critical regional stakeholders
- Publicize and facilitate community meetings with local and regional stakeholders
- Provide all available planning materials that include the community for review by IHDA community revitalization staff
- Provide all private, local, state, and federal funding sources that the community has accessed, applied for, or received in the previous 10 years
- Establish and oversee a work plan for this initiative

FAQ for Housing Developers

Q18. WHAT TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS GIVEN TO HOUSING DEVELOPERS?

IHDA's CRPSs can provide technical assistance to you in the following ways:

- Understand the guidelines for preparing Community Revitalization Strategies on your Low Income Housing Tax Credit application
- Strategically plan for future tax credit development sites
- Gain expertise regarding housing development, planning processes, and utilizing governmental resources
- Connect to market analysis tools that help communities understand and predict trends in their areas, particularly related to housing

Q19. WHEN SHOULD DEVELOPERS CONTACT IHDA IF THEIR SUBJECT PROPERTY FALLS WITHIN A QCT OR R/ECAP?

Developers should contact IHDA Community Revitalization Planning Specialists (CRPSs) immediately if their subject property falls within a QCT or R/ECAP. If a developer is planning on applying and is unsure if their subject property is in a QCT or R/ECAP they should visit www.policymap.com to locate their subject property and understand its classification under “Federal Guidelines.” Developers may also contact IHDA’s CRPSs for assistance in identifying such designations.

Q20. HOW SHOULD DEVELOPERS PREPARE TO SUBMIT A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY TO IHDA?

Developers should use the [Community Revitalization Strategies Thresholds and Scoring Criteria](#) as a guide to outline what documentation is needed. In addition, it is suggested to promptly begin researching planning documents that may exist in the area of the subject property. Likewise, connecting with local agencies and government entities can contribute to the search of such documentation.

Q21. HOW SHOULD DEVELOPERS SUBMIT THEIR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY TO IHDA?

Producing a cover letter that highlights the location (*i.e. using PDF bookmarks*) and summary of documentation and scoring requirements is highly encouraged and helpful. The cover letter should be attached with all other documentation and requirements, and uploaded to the Multifamily Portal as a part of a project’s application materials.

Q22. *WHAT ARE THE BASIC PLAN COMPONENTS?

1. Community Participation (residents, stakeholders, assets) in the creation and/or guidance of the CRS. Adequate community-level participation must be demonstrated.
2. Adoption, approval, or local champion. Submitted documentation must have local governmental approval and/or an existing local champion in order to qualify for review.
3. A concerted effort has been undertaken for a specific community/neighborhood.
4. The community revitalization strategy must consider affordable housing.
5. Evidence of economic development integration.

Q23. *WHAT ARE THE SCORING COMPONENTS?

1. Building opportunity [4pts]
2. Access to employment and living wage jobs [2pts]
3. Community Revitalization strategy considers multiple revitalization efforts and addresses mix of land uses [2 pts]
4. Plan implementation and funding [2pts]

*Based on the [Community Revitalization Strategies Thresholds and Scoring Criteria](#)

LIHTC Application Definitions

Q24. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A “COMMUNITY/ NEIGHBORHOOD”?

For the purposes of Community Revitalization Strategy, the term “Community/Neighborhood” is defined as the project area for a Community Revitalization Strategy. An area of a pre-designated size that is larger than a parcel, PUD, or subdivision, but small enough that one municipality or county (or a small conglomerate of municipalities or counties) can have jurisdiction over it. A Community or Neighborhood can also align with an existing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Target Area, Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA), or Community Revitalization Strategy Area (CRSA).

Q25. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS “AFFORDABLE HOUSING”?

For the purposes of Community Revitalization Strategy, the term “Affordable Housing” is defined by one of the following criteria:

- Rent-Restricted rental units (legally restricted via use of programs such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME, Housing Trust Funds, etc.) where rent is restricted to levels affordable to households earning under 30%, 50%, 60%, or 80% of the Area Median Income;
- Rent-Subsidized rental units (examples of rental subsidies are Project Based Rental Assistance, Project Based Vouchers, Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 811, Rental Housing Support Program, etc.);
- Affordable Homeownership Programs – Use of subsidized mortgage credit certificates, mortgage revenue bonds, or down payment assistance that are limited to households earning less than 120% of Area Median Income.

Q26. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A “PLAN”?

For the purposes of Community Revitalization Strategy, the term “Plan” is defined as any documentation (i.e. corridor plans, newspaper articles, marketing plans, etc.) that successfully qualifies a neighborhood revitalization strategy for review.

Q27. FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES, WHAT IS DEFINED AS A “SUBJECT PROPERTY(IES)”?

For the purposes of Community Revitalization Strategy, the term “subject Property(ies)” is defined as the property or properties where Affordable Housing activity proposed by the LIHTC application will be located.

Q28. WHO NEEDS TO MEET THE MINIMUM THRESHOLDS FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES?

Subject Property(ies) that fall under a Qualified Census Tract (QCT) or racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (R/ECAP) must meet the minimum thresholds for community revitalization strategies.

Q29. WHAT IS A QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACT (QCT)?

LIHTC Qualified Census Tracts, as defined under the section 42(d)(5)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, include any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Bureau of the Census) in which at least 50 percent of households have an income less than 60 percent of the Area Median Gross Income (AMGI), or which has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent. You may find a list of [2018 Illinois Qualified Census Tracts here](#).

Q30. WHAT IS A RACIALLY/ETHNICALLY CONCENTRATED AREAS OF POVERTY (R/ECAP)?

According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a neighborhood can be a R/ECAP if it has a poverty rate that exceeds 40% or is three or more times the average tract poverty rate for the metropolitan/micropolitan area, whichever threshold is lower. HUD designates census tracts with this extreme poverty that satisfy the racial/ethnic concentration threshold as R/ECAPs.

(Project/Community Name)

CR-PID: C-XXX

IHDA is committed to expanding the capacity of underserved communities in Illinois to identify local housing needs and to empower those communities to take steps to meet those needs. As a part of this commitment, **IHDA proposes the formation of a partnership with (community/partner name) to build upon and link to existing efforts, identify strengths and needs within the community, and otherwise generate localized capacity via a Community Revitalization Strategy process** (defined below). This process may result in increased local capacity to connect housing and economic development and community goals, and may help bring affordable housing to areas throughout the state by helping communities to minimize barriers of access to housing development tools. *This pledge to engage a Community Revitalization Strategy should not be construed as a promise of funding.*

A Community Revitalization Strategy is a deliberate, concerted, and locally approved plan or interconnected series of local efforts with local stakeholder support intended to improve and enhance specific aspects of a community. It can mean economic development, housing development, or community development. A strong Community Revitalization Strategy will provide guidance for the community to follow to bring about its vision over the long term, and should include input from local residents, neighborhood boards and groups, nonprofit agencies, local businesses, educational institutions, service agencies, and other local stakeholders.

By undertaking this Community Revitalization Strategy endeavor with (community/partner name), IHDA believes that it will be increasing capacity on multiple fronts. Primarily, it will be contributing to the expansion of local leaders' capacity to see Affordable Housing as part of their community's growth, and to include a variety of such opportunities in their plans. Additionally, housing developers and investors will benefit by being able to connect to and potentially utilize the market analysis tools and funding sources identified by this process to strategically align their plans with the (partner)'s for developing affordable housing.

There should be many local parties involved in the Community Revitalization Strategy. The following Scope of Work and expected timeline contained in Appendix I present what IHDA and (community/partner name) agree to moving forward with this process. It is recommended that (community/partner name) create similar Scope of Work agreements with other parties that will be participating in the process.

As part of this Scope of Work, IHDA agrees to:

1. Participate in community and/or stakeholder meetings (in person if scheduling allows)
2. Review and make suggestions to community-generated lists of stakeholders
3. Conduct a housing needs assessment
4. Create a toolbox for the community to initiate a community revitalization strategy locally
5. Provide technical assistance surrounding the Low Income Housing Tax Credit application process
6. Actively participate in fleshing out and establishing strategic planning (via community guided work plan)
7. Identify potential funding sources for strategy implementation (note: this is not a commitment of funding)

As part of this Scope of Work, (community/partner name) agrees to:

1. Identify a local point-person who will be responsible for collecting input from stakeholders, organizing meetings, assigning tasks to working group, and overseeing work plan
2. Provide identification of and outreach to critical local stakeholders and local "champions"
3. Provide identification of and outreach to critical regional stakeholders
4. Publicize and facilitate community meetings with local and regional stakeholders
5. Provide all available planning materials that include the community for review by IHDA community revitalization staff
6. Provide all private, local, state, and federal funding sources that the community has accessed, applied for, or received in the previous 10 years
7. Establish and oversee a work plan for this initiative



Expected Outcomes from the Scope of Work:

IHDA's intended outcome is to help communities throughout Illinois create a Community Revitalization Strategy that can accomplish the following goals:

1. Strategize future planning and investment
2. Establish linkages to ongoing initiatives for Economic Development, Education, Health Care, Food Access, etc.
3. Identify realistic housing needs and goals for the community
4. Coordinate with state, regional, and federal agencies, as well as local organizations, to help meet the planning and implementation needs of the community
5. Identify potential funding sources for plan implementation
6. Identify financially feasible models for meeting housing needs (to be enacted locally)
7. Become a calling card for the community to attract investors
8. Form a working advisory group to supervise ongoing implementation of planning strategies
9. Strategically plan for future tax credit development sites

Signature, indicating understanding and acceptance of the Scope of Work:

(Community/partner representative name, title)

Date

Community Needs Assessment Survey



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is committed to expanding the planning capacity of small and/or rural communities in Illinois to identify local housing needs, and empower those communities to take steps to meet those needs. As part of this commitment, IHDA offers technical assistance to communities in order to build upon and link to existing efforts, identify strengths and needs within the community, and otherwise generate localized capacity via a Community Revitalization Strategy process.

We invite you to be part of this Community Revitalization Strategy process by participating in the "Community Needs Assessment Survey." The survey is completely anonymous, and does not collect any identifying information. You should be able to complete the survey in under 10 minutes. Your participation will help our agency and your community strategize for future planning and investment, and identify community needs and goals. The survey first considers several community characteristics such as: Mobility, Community Life, Economy, Education and Wellness, and lastly, Community Engagement and Initiatives. The second portion of the survey further assesses your community input.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

MOBILITY

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly
Agree

Not
Applicable

My community...

Has adequate lighting in public spaces

Has emergency phones or call boxes in public spaces

Allows for clear sight lines that provide safety in public spaces

Has recreational paths and walking trails

Is pedestrian-friendly

I am able to...

Easily travel by bicycle in my community (*bicycle trails, bike lanes*)

Easily travel by car in my community (*paved roads, road maintenance*)

Access my downtown/commercial area by my transportation of choice

COMMUNITY LIFE

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly
Agree

Not
Applicable

Housing in my community...

Is in good condition

Offers options that suit a variety of lifestyles and needs

Is affordable to households making a variety of incomes

Is available for the elderly

(Other)

There are enough public places for the community
(*parks, community rooms, squares*)

The cleanliness of downtown is adequate

ECONOMY

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly
Agree

Not
Applicable

My community has...

Adequate commercial and retail development

Various types of retail establishments

Various types of dining establishments

Storefronts that look well-kept and attract shoppers



ECONOMY, continued	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
--------------------	-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	----------------

My community has...

A variety of employment opportunities that provide wages that enable employees to live in the community if they choose

Legal services available

Adequate financial services (*banking*)

I am able to...

Run the majority of my daily errands without leaving my community

Afford to run the majority of my daily errands without leaving my community

EDUCATION AND WELLNESS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
------------------------	-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	----------------

There are opportunities and services that meet the needs of my community for...

K-12 education

Post-secondary education (*community college*)

Vocational training and education

Job training and education

Health services (*hospitals or clinics*)

Pharmacy care and services

Adequate childcare options

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INITIATIVES	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
--------------------------------------	-------------------	----------	---------	-------	----------------	----------------

My community...

Makes plans with its residents' best interests in mind

Works with local business owners to improve public and shared spaces to create a sense of community

Is working to create a positive future for the downtown/square area

When it comes to my community, I am...

Excited by the changes and plans I feel are happening

Aware of opportunities to engage with my community leaders (*public or town hall meetings*)

Interested in the opportunity to provide feedback to my community's leaders regarding local issues



COMMUNITY INPUT

1. Please describe any new development, if any, that you believe would most benefit your community:

2. What type(s) of commercial development do you believe would benefit your community?

3. What type(s) of economic development do you believe would benefit your community?

4. Do you think there is need for more housing opportunities for residents in your community?

Yes

No

Not sure

5. What type(s) of housing do you think there is need for in your community? *Please select all that apply.*

Rental housing

Homeownership

6. What is the size of your household?

1 person

2-4 persons

5+ persons

7. What is your household income?

\$0 - \$30,000

\$30,001 - \$60,000

\$60,001 - \$100,000

\$100,001 or higher

8. How do you learn about things happening in your community? *Please select all that apply.*

Television

Radio

Newspaper

City government website

Community newsletter

Word-of-mouth

Social media (*Facebook, Twitter, etc.*)

Other:

9. Where do you currently reside?

City/town/village name:

County: