

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY



## Definitions

- **Community Revitalization Strategy (CRS)** shall mean 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 Revitalization Strategy Area (defined below). Please note: A locally approved plan is but one method of documentation, but and because formalized plans are beyond the capabilities of all municipalities in the state, well-documented efforts taking place outside of formalized plans are equally acceptable for this purpose.
- **Community Revitalization Strategy Area (CRSA)** shall mean the Project area for a Community Revitalization Strategy. The CRSA must be contained to an area that is **the smaller of the following two options:** (1) An area that is no larger than a three-mile radius from the subject property(ies), OR (2) An area (census tract(s), municipality, neighborhood/community area, etc.) with a population no greater than 30,000. IHDA Community Revitalization staff may approve a larger CRSA on an individual basis if sponsor provides documentation evidencing the need to define a larger area.
- **Affordable Housing** – For the purposes of Community Revitalization Strategy Section IX C. ii) b. only, 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, Illinois Affordable 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, and Rental Housing Support Program);
  - Affordable homeownership programs, including the 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.
- **BIPOC** shall mean “Black, Indigenous, or Person(s) of Color”
- **Subject Property(ies)** shall mean the property or properties where Affordable Housing activity proposed by the LIHTC application will be located.

IHDA provides technical assistance to project sponsors and communities that require or are interested in submitting a Community Revitalization Strategy. For more information, or to request technical assistance, please contact [Revitalization@IHDA.org](mailto:Revitalization@IHDA.org).

Additional information and resources can be found on IHDA's [Community Revitalization Website](#).

### Cover Letter

Required for both 4% and 9% applications. A template cover letter provided by IHDA must be utilized.

[Click here](#) to utilize IHDA's Cover Letter template (required)

A cover letter citing the locations (**document title and page numbers**) within the submitted materials where thresholds and scoring criteria can be found. The Community Revitalization Strategy for 4% and 9% applications will not be evaluated without this cover letter.

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Threshold Requirements

### Threshold Requirements

Within the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, all projects may submit a Community Revitalization Strategy, which can be awarded up to 10 points in a 9% competitive application. To be eligible for these points, the Community Revitalization Strategy must first meet all of the Threshold Requirements outlined below. **All materials, plans, and supporting documentation must be dated within five (5) years of application submission** (excepting community participation, see below); IHDA Community Revitalization staff may approve the submission of materials, plans, or supporting documentation that are up to ten (10) years old from the time of application submission, but sponsor must receive technical assistance from IHDA Community Revitalization staff in advance of application, must submit the verification memo emailed to you by IHDA CR planners confirming acceptability of documentation older than five (5) years from IHDA Community Revitalization staff upon application, and must demonstrate a clear connection to the present conditions and goals of the community through a detailed narrative and evidence from the community.

Note: Successful Community Revitalization Strategies frequently consist of multiple different documents from multiple sources that provide evidence of interconnected deliberate, concerted, and locally approved planning efforts/activities. Where possible and relevant, please include complete documents, rather than excerpts, to provide reviewer with necessary context.

Additionally, all projects proposing to locate in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT) or HUD-recognized Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Area of Poverty (R/ECAP), or projects demonstrating market concerns as identified by IHDA, determined at the time of PPA, must submit a Community Revitalization Strategy and supporting documentation that at a minimum meets the mandatory Threshold Requirements outlined below. This requirement applies to projects seeking either 4% or 9% LIHTC.

#### Defined Community Revitalization Strategy and Area

All of the following must be provided:

- A) A written description of the Community Revitalization Strategy Area designated for revitalization, with boundaries clearly described.  
The CRSA must be contained to an area that is **the smaller of the following two options**: (1) An area that is no larger than a three-mile radius from the subject property(ies), OR (2) An area (census tract(s), municipality, neighborhood/community area, etc.) with a population no greater than 30,000.  
IHDA Community Revitalization staff may approve a larger CRSA on an individual basis if sponsor provides documentation evidencing the need to define a larger area.
- B) A detailed narrative of the Community Revitalization Strategy. This must address why the designated Area was chosen for revitalization, and specifically how the Strategy has and/or will address the challenges that residents of the community face in accessing resources and amenities.
- C) A map locating the subject property(ies) within the designated Community Revitalization Strategy Area. The map must identify CRSA amenities, institutions, and assets, as well as where affordable housing is both currently located and planned. If available, land use and zoning designations may also be included.  
**Click [here](#) to utilize IHDA's Asset Map template (optional)**

**The Community Revitalization Strategy defined above must demonstrate components of:**

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

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### 1) Affordable housing

All of the following must be provided:

- A) Documentation explicitly stating the need and desire for affordable housing as part of the Strategy for the community. The type of revitalization needed should be specified, such as preservation, demolition and greening, infill, rehabilitation, new development, rental housing, and/or homeownership (*community plans which indicate targeted areas for affordable housing, a letter summarizing local efforts made to designate areas for affordable housing, housing plans, etc.*)
- B) Documentation demonstrating the subject property's alignment with the Community Revitalization Strategy.

### 2) Community participation

Activities must have taken place within three (3) years of application submission.

At least 2 of the following must be provided:

- A) Local advertisements or evidence of community outreach for public meetings related to the Community Revitalization Strategy (*newspaper advertisements, local community newsletters, leaflets, local postings, etc.*)
- B) Attendance sheets or sign-in sheets from public meetings.
- C) Documentation showing the input gained from public meetings (*SWOT analyses, meeting minutes, lists of preferences, documentation of comments received, etc.*)
- D) Evidence of community-led project(s) that align with the Community Revitalization Strategy (*materials documenting community-based development initiative or program, community-based participatory budgeting process, etc.*)
- E) Community participation or action components in published planning documents or efforts (*TIF plans, comprehensive plans, neighborhood/corridor plans, etc.*)
- F) Evidence of a mix of public, private, and nonprofit investment in the Community Revitalization Strategy indicating a broad coalition of local stakeholders (*agreements or Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) between community-based organizations and financial institutions or government entities, etc.*)
- G) Documentation of sponsor- or developer-hosted community meeting  
**Click [here](#) to utilize IHDA's Community Meeting Toolkit (optional)**

### 3) Plan adoption, approval, or support by local champion

At least 1 of the following must be provided:

- A) A resolution passed by a local governmental board, community, or committee stating the adoption of a plan that is a component of or relevant to the Community Revitalization Strategy (*comprehensive plan, transportation plan, neighborhood priorities report, etc.*)
- B) A letter signed by an elected official from the Strategy Area detailing the official approval of component(s) of the Community Revitalization Strategy. The letter must contain the date the plan was approved and the names of the officials and/or staff who approved it.
- C) Meeting minutes from a local governmental board, community, or committee meeting which clearly state the approval of component(s) of the Community Revitalization Strategy.
- D) Letter of support for the Community Revitalization Strategy from an existing local "champion" or "quarterback," not on the project development team, who has the capacity for mobilizing and coordinating resources and funding (*CDC, local community leader, neighborhood group, etc.*)

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Threshold Requirements

### 4) Economic development integration

All of the following must be provided:

- A) A completed CRSA Market Snapshot, provided by IHDA  
**Click [here](#) to utilize IHDA's CRSA Market Snapshot (required)**
- B) A realistic implementation plan to promote the Strategy Area's economic progress that both identifies and addresses the community's most pertinent challenges, goals, and opportunities across a range of sectors (*activities to create meaningful jobs, attract businesses or a grocery store, invest in public infrastructure such as potholes or bike lanes, etc.*).

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Scoring Criteria

### Scoring Criteria

Submissions that have met all of the Threshold Requirements can score up to 10 points for demonstrating that their Community Revitalization Strategy includes components outlined within the following Scoring Criteria. **All materials, plans, and supporting documentation must be dated within five (5) years of application submission;** IHDA Community Revitalization staff may approve the submission of materials, plans, or supporting documentation that are up to ten (10) years old from the time of application submission, but sponsor must receive technical assistance from IHDA Community Revitalization staff in advance of application, must submit the verification memo emailed to you by IHDA CR planners confirming acceptability of documentation older than five (5) years from IHDA Community Revitalization staff upon application, and must demonstrate a clear connection to the present conditions and goals of the community through a detailed narrative and evidence from the community.

Note: Successful Community Revitalization Strategies frequently consist of multiple different documents from multiple sources that provide evidence of interconnected deliberate, concerted, and locally approved planning efforts/activities. Where possible and relevant, please include complete documents, rather than excerpts, to provide reviewer with necessary context.

If Project selects the Community Targeting path of supplementing Quality of Life Index (QOLI) points with Community Revitalization Strategies points at PPA, scores will be calculated ONLY for specific indicators in **BUILDING OPPORTUNITY: 2) Capacity-building and partnerships;** and **ACCESSIBILITY AND LIVABILITY: 1) Improvements in amenities and services** that address point deficiencies in the indicated QOLI categories.

Submissions may utilize the documentation referenced in their Threshold Requirements, as well as any needed additional materials to provide evidence of the following aspects within the Community Revitalization Strategy Area:

<b>BUILDING OPPORTUNITY</b>	
<b>1) Addressing a pre-existing community need</b>	
2 points available	
A)	1 point is automatically earned if project site(s) falls within a census tract(s) designated as a "Moderate Revitalization Impact Area" as listed on <b>IHDA's Market Research website*</b> . An additional point may be earned per category C below.
B)	2 points are automatically earned if project site(s) falls within a census tract(s) designated as a "High Revitalization Impact Area" as listed on <b>IHDA's Market Research website*</b> .
C)	Project sites not falling within a designated Revitalization Impact Area may earn up to 2 points by demonstrating their explicit need for revitalization. To earn these points, a narrative supported by accompanying evidence must illustrate the Community Revitalization Strategy Area's need in at least 1 of the categories listed below, or other pertinent and measurable areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Rapidly declining population</li><li>-Employment insecurity</li><li>-High concentration of blighted housing stock</li><li>-Unmet need for health services, educational opportunities, fresh foods, available/affordable housing, or other basic amenities</li><li>-Other community demographic or economic insecurities</li></ul> <i>In order to qualify for points under category C, claims in narrative must be substantiated and verified by accompanying evidence.</i>

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Scoring Criteria

<b>2) Capacity-building and partnerships</b>	
2 points available (1 point per category satisfied)	
<b>Acceptable types of documentation for this area include executed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), internship agreements with colleges/universities, curricula of accessible training programs, grant applications, applications for technical assistance, letters of intent from anchor institutions, etc.</b>	
A)	Documentation of at least one (1) formal partnership or official collaboration between the local government and/or established community-based organizations working towards a public agenda in the Strategy Area (neighborhood boards, local nonprofits, etc.) with organizations that offer technical assistance, capacity-building, or shared services. Documentation must also demonstrate that these partnerships have measurably improved community or resident outcomes.
B)	Evidence that the community has or is developing programming to actively place interns and/or students in public-service positions ( <i>municipal government, social services, healthcare, education, etc.</i> ).
C)	Evidence of community services available to increase job training and access ( <i>skills-based trainings offered at free or reduced costs, transportation services for job access, seeking job-creation entities, etc.</i> ).
D)	Documentation of a formal agreement between the subject property and an entity listed on the State Economic Development Resource Directory <b>or</b> a HUD Section 3 plan.
E)	Evidence of financial support allocated from major community stakeholders such as universities, hospitals, or other anchor institutions to the Community Revitalization Strategy and/or the subject property(ies) ( <i>this may include allocations from an approved Opportunity Fund</i> ).
F)	Evidence that the community is actively seeking assistance for capacity-building activities ( <i>applying for grants, participating in training or technical assistance programs including those offered by IHDA, etc.</i> ).
G)	Documentation of at least one (1) formal partnership between sponsor/developer and a certified MBE/WBE providing services and/or programming to the subject property <b>and</b> accessible to the larger community.
<b>3) Promoting racial equity</b>	
1 point available	
A)	Documentation that the community or Community Revitalization Strategy is actively promoting racial equity or pursuing racial equity initiatives. To earn this point, a narrative supported by accompanying evidence must illustrate the presence of at least one of the categories listed below, or other pertinent and measurable areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Active outreach, inclusion, and leadership of BIPOC populations in planning activities</li><li>-Education or training availability for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)</li><li>-Fair housing programming, marketing, or education</li><li>-Promotion of homeownership to BIPOC communities</li><li>-Provision of housing counseling and education targeting BIPOC communities</li><li>-Provision of translation services for local programs and services</li><li>-Support of entrepreneurial activities and initiatives for BIPOC communities</li><li>-Support of wealth-building initiatives for BIPOC communities</li><li>-Other activities that promote racial equity</li></ul>

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Scoring Criteria

ACCESSIBILITY AND LIVABILITY	
<b>1) Improvements in amenities and services</b> 3 points available (1 point per category satisfied)	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Document local efforts to <u>improve and/or preserve</u> access to the following elements within or available specifically to the Community Revitalization Strategy Area.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A map/list of existing amenities present in the CRSA <u>will not</u> satisfy these categories.                      Documentation must indicate how the CRS and/or subject property will <b><u>improve or preserve access</u></b> to existing amenities and/or provide new or innovative amenities within the CRSA.</p>	
A)	Banking and financial services
B)	Business development or incubation
C)	Childcare availability
D)	Civic services and engagement opportunities
E)	Community engagement via developer- or sponsor-hosted community meetings <b>Click <a href="#">here</a> to utilize IHDA's Community Meeting Toolkit (optional)</b>
F)	Educational opportunities ( <i>K-12, adult/vocational</i> )
G)	Food access
H)	Healthcare and social services
I)	Homelessness services/supportive housing initiatives
J)	Municipal/community-wide broadband internet access
K)	Recreational opportunities
L)	Retail opportunities
M)	Senior center and/or senior social/recreational programming
N)	Streetscaping, public art, river walks, garden walks, farmers/art markets, tourism, other activities that attract visitors and business
O)	Transportation access
P)	Other: Provide documentation illustrating how <b>innovative</b> activities not defined above are being used to meet the needs of the CRSA

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING	
<b>1) The Community Revitalization Strategy is being implemented</b> 1 point available (1 point per category satisfied)	
A)	Narrative detailing the Community Revitalization Strategy's implementation schedule, in specific quarters or months and years ( <i>e.g. Q1 2022 or January-March 2022</i> ), from plan creation to present. Accompanying evidence must also be provided demonstrating that significant portions of the Strategy have already been accomplished or are underway that can be substantiated via site visits and/or audits.

# 2024-25 COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

## Scoring Criteria

B)	Proof of implementation of infrastructure improvements made within the Strategy Area needed for continued development and/or investment <i>(map of road improvements, proof of investment in building facades, local press coverage etc.).</i>
C)	Evidence of measurable progress in addressing local services issues <i>(public health, homelessness, employment, and training, etc.).</i>
<b>2) The Community Revitalization Strategy has funding and will continue to be implemented</b> 1 point available (1 point per category satisfied)	
A)	A full budget showing prior funding directed toward plan implementation <b>and</b> future budgeting of funding (preferred: 5-years in the future) for implementation of the Community Revitalization Strategy.
B)	Map(s) showing active incentive programs <i>(TIF districts, Enterprise Zones, Opportunity Zones, etc.)</i> available in the Strategy Area, and an accompanying narrative explaining a plan for utilizing these resources to address community needs.
C)	A letter or statement from the municipal or county government attesting to funding already committed <b>and</b> future funding committed to the Strategy.
E)	Evidence that local funding has been committed to the housing components of the Strategy <i>(CDBG, HOME, TIF, grants, etc.).</i>
H)	Specific documentation of financial planning components to achieve elements of the Strategy in local adopted plans <i>(consolidated plan, annual action plan, local comprehensive plan, etc.).</i>

\*Points automatically awarded under Scoring Criteria #1 to scattered-site projects falling within multiple census tracts will be prorated based on the number of units falling within the census tract(s) for which the Revitalization Impact Area designation(s) applies.