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## **Illinois Housing Development Authority Wins National Awards for Innovative Housing Programs**

**CHICAGO** – The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) has been nationally recognized for its transformative approach in tackling some of the state’s toughest housing challenges: affordable homeownership and homelessness prevention. At the 2025 National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) Annual Conference, IHDA received two Annual Awards for Program Excellence:

- Homeownership: Empowering New Buyers with IHDA’s Access Plus Financing Initiative.
- Special Needs Housing: Combatting Homelessness with IHDA’s Court-Based Rental Assistance Program (CBRAP).

“Here in Illinois, we’re focused on creating new, innovative pathways to affordable and accessible housing – and I’m proud that IHDA has been recognized as a national leader in that effort,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Whether it’s helping our working families achieve their dreams of homeownership or providing lifeline rental assistance to Illinoisans who need it the most, we’re committed to reducing housing insecurity across the state.”

Established in 1984, the NCSHA Annual Awards for Program Excellence identify and elevate industry best practices and encourage continued housing finance agency (HFA) innovation. Entries are judged on criteria including creativity, replicability, response to state housing needs, and demonstrating benefits that outweigh costs.

“These awards highlight Illinois’ leadership in creating practical, people-first housing solutions to address some of our most urgent housing needs,” **said IHDA Executive Director Kristin Faust**. “By expanding access to affordable homeownership and supporting residents at risk of losing their residences, IHDA is setting a national example for how states can strengthen their communities. I’m honored our peers recognized IHDA and am extremely proud of our staff for the energy they put into developing and implementing these initiatives that are helping thousands of people across Illinois.”

## **Access Plus Financing Initiative: Unlocking Homeownership**

With rising home prices, tightening lending standards, and limited housing inventory, first-time buyers face increasingly steep barriers to homeownership. IHDA's [Access Plus Financing Initiative](#) tackles those challenges head-on by incentivizing lenders to lower mortgage costs and create more pathways to stable, affordable homeownership. The program focuses on a specific and often neglected segment of the housing market: homes priced at \$60,000 or less. These lower-value properties, often located in disinvested neighborhoods or rural communities, can offer a vital path to housing stability and generational wealth.

Since its launch, the Access Plus Financing Initiative:

- Assisted 207 new homebuyers.
- Generated more than \$8.8 million in total loan volume.
- Supported buyers with an average purchase price of \$53,680 and average income of \$37,685.
- Reached rural communities, with nearly half of all loans (46.38%) made in southern Illinois.

This initiative is helping make the dream of homeownership achievable for more working families across the state. You can read the full submission [here](#).

“The Illinois Senate passed [Senate Resolution 170](#) to highlight the urgent need to tackle housing inequities across our state and ensure that every resident has access to safe, affordable housing,” **said State Senator Robert Peters (D-Chicago)**. “IHDA did not waste any time creating the Access Plus Financing Initiative, an essential tool in achieving this goal, creating a market for micro-mortgages that make homeownership more accessible and helping to keep properties in the hands of families, not investors. With continued legislative support and the innovative efforts of the Illinois Housing Development Authority, we are taking meaningful steps to address the housing crisis and create a more equitable, sustainable future for all Illinoisans. Congratulations on a well-deserved award.”

## **Court-Based Rental Assistance Program: A Shield Against Homelessness**

When pandemic-era renter protections expired, housing instability surged, particularly for low-income and minority households. IHDA responded by creating the [Court-Based Rental Assistance Program](#) (CBRAP), a first-of-its-kind statewide program that integrates rental assistance directly into Illinois' eviction court process. By providing financial relief at critical moments, CBRAP helps tenants avoid displacement while ensuring landlords are made whole. It is now Illinois' first permanent statewide rental assistance program, funded through state appropriations.

By May 2025, CBRAP:

- Approved more than 5,500 applications.

- Distributed over \$45 million in rental assistance.
- Provided an average of \$8,197.89 per household.
- Served primarily households earning below 50% of Area Median Income.

The full submission is online [here](#).

"CBRAP is a critical lifeline for our communities, providing direct support to renters facing housing instability and ensuring our friends and families are not forced into the streets due to unforeseen circumstances," **said Assistant Majority Leader Dagmara 'Dee' Avelar (D-Romeoville)**. "The program is a testament to the power of collaboration to create lasting, positive change. As we continue to invest in affordable housing solutions in the Illinois General Assembly, I am proud to see Illinois leading the way in tackling the housing crisis with programs that prioritize fairness, equity, and compassion. I am thrilled to congratulate IHDA for being recognized for their transformative work through CBRAP."

All 2025 NCSHA Annual Awards for Program Excellence program submissions and list of winners are available at [ncsha.org/awards](https://ncsha.org/awards).

NCSHA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization created to advance, through advocacy and education, the efforts of the nation's state HFAs and their partners to provide affordable housing to those who need it. NCSHA's vision: An affordably housed nation. Learn more at [www.ncsha.org](https://www.ncsha.org).

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### **About the Illinois Housing Development Authority**

*IHDA is a self-supporting and mission-driven state agency dedicated to financing the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Illinois. IHDA offers affordable mortgages and down payment assistance for homebuyers, provides financing for the development of affordable rental housing, and manages a variety of assistance programs to create communities where all Illinoisans can live, work, and thrive. Since it was established in 1967, IHDA has delivered more than \$29 billion in state, federal, and leveraged financing to make possible the purchase, development, or rehabilitation of 335,750 homes and apartments for low- and middle-income households. For more information on IHDA programs, visit [www.ihda.org](https://www.ihda.org).*