



HOMETOWN
COLLABORATION INITIATIVE
Building Blocks for High Quality Communities

How to Write a Competitive Application



Part 1 | Overview of HCI Program

Part 2 | Review of HCI Application Timeline

Part 3 | How to Compose a Competitive Application

Part 4 | Question and Answer Session

HCI Program Overview

What is HCI?



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HCI is a program available to Indiana communities that are committed to building on their existing assets. It encompasses efforts to...

1

Grow the **leadership** pipeline and expand the number of people involved in community improvement efforts.

2

Embrace **economic development strategies** that link to the economic strengths of a community.

3

Pursue **placemaking** activities that build on the community's built and natural resources.

Sponsors & Partners



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Sponsors



**The Indiana Office of
Community Rural Affairs
(OCRA)**



**The Office of the
Lieutenant Governor**

Partners



Purdue University

Purdue Center for Regional
Development

Purdue University Extension



Ball State University

Building Better Communities
Department

College of Architecture and Planning
– Urban Design

Eligible Communities



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**Has a population of
25,000 or less**

(Can include cities, towns or counties
that meet the population size
requirement)



**Willing to invest a modest
amount of financial
resources into the HCI
initiative (\$5,000)**

(May come from any combination of public,
private and/or nonprofit sources and can be
reinvested in your community. Only required of
communities selected to be part of HCI)



3 Capstone

Planning for
Our Future

2 Building
Blocks

Developing Our
Hometown
Leadership Skills

Strengthening
Our Hometown
Economy

Placemaking with
Our Hometown's
Natural and Built
Resources

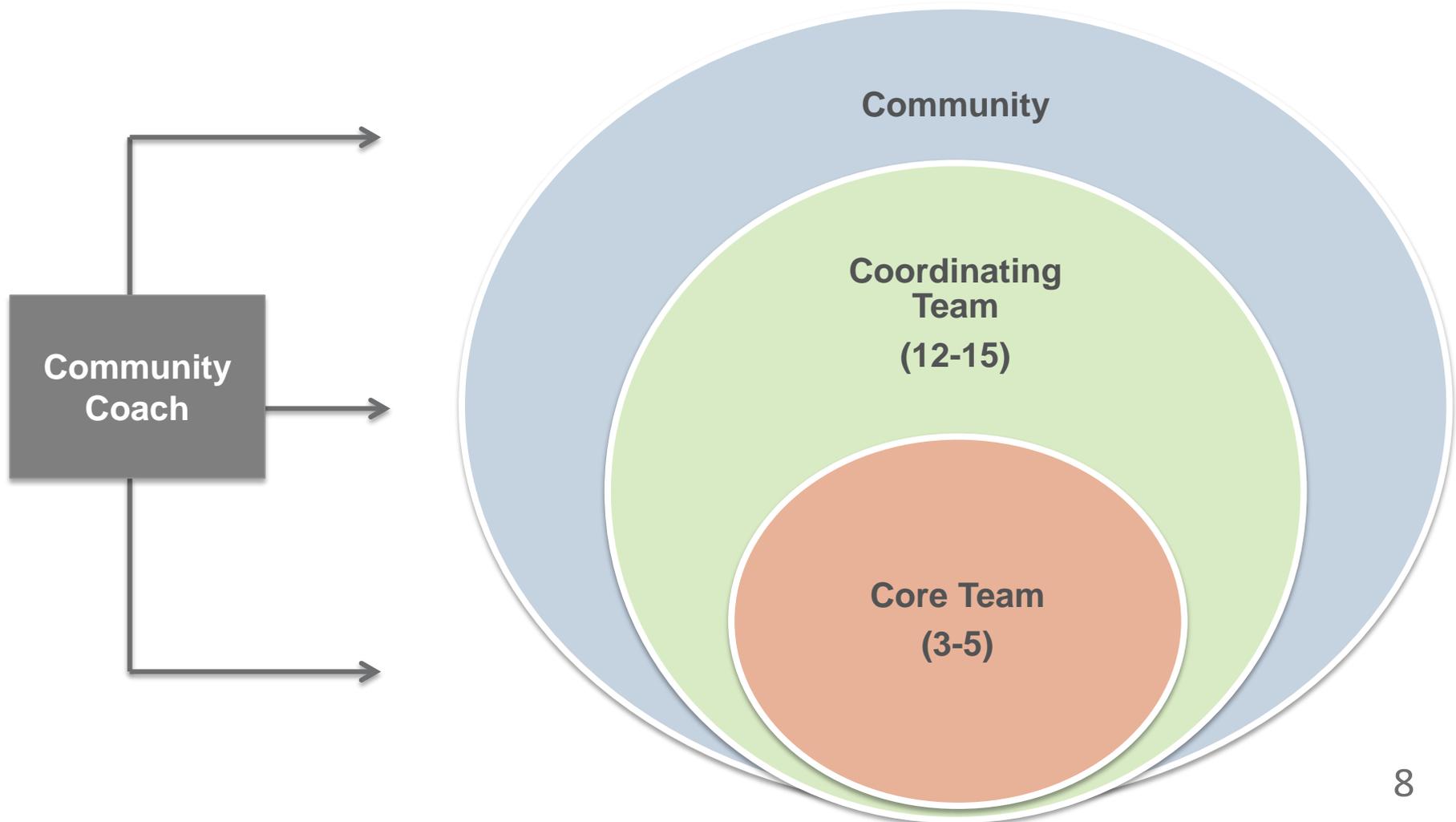
1 Foundation

Building Our Team

The HCI Team Structure



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The Coordinating Team



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Other Key Components



The local **Coordinating Team** can establish a **Core Team** (three to five people) to handle detailed logistics

Engaging the larger **community** at various times will be essential

A **coach** will work with each HCI community to guide, support and challenge the team's activities



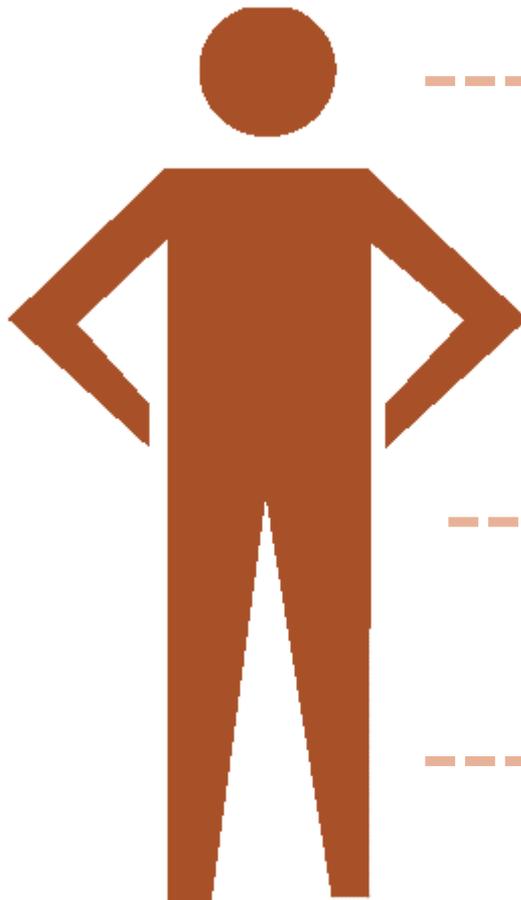
Who will serve as coaches?



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- Professional staff from Purdue University Extension
 - Five regional educators (Masters level professionals with strong community/economic development training/experiences)
- Professional staff from Ball State University's Building Better Communities program
- Geographic distribution of HCI communities will be critical in the assignment of coaches

Ideal HCI Team Members



Open to new approaches for strengthening the community

Willing to spend the time to study key information and seek the input from local residents & groups

Ready to take action based on facts collected and local input

Willing to devote the time and energy needed to guide HCI through all three phases

Topics Covered with the Coordinating Team



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**Reviewing roles and
responsibilities**

**Studying data on your
community**

**Reviewing existing
community strategic
plans**

**Discovering your local
assets**

**Securing information
from residents
(surveys)**

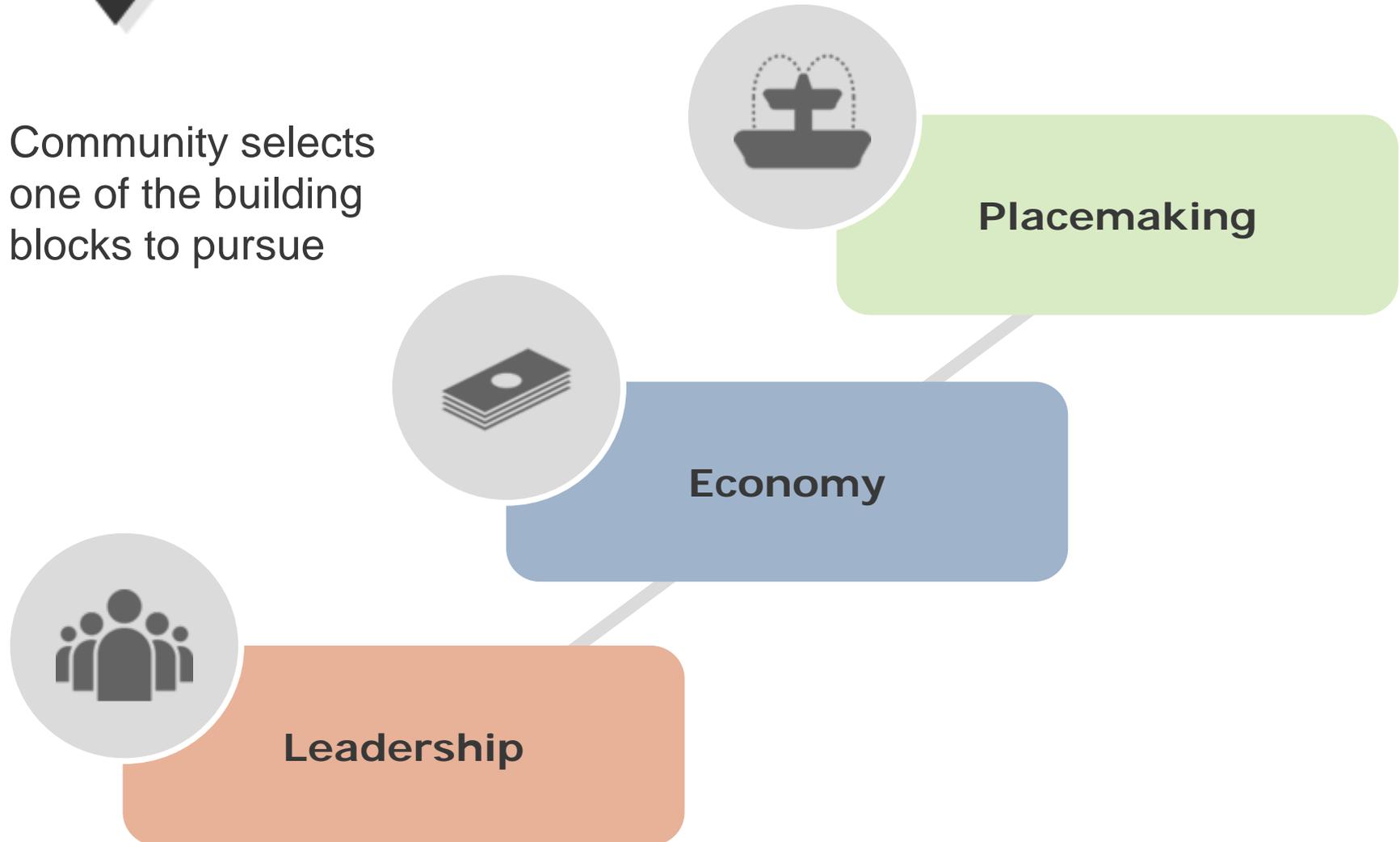
**Preparing for a
community-wide forum**

**Synthesizing the data
and inputs to pick a
building
block**

The Three HCI Building Blocks



Community selects
one of the building
blocks to pursue



Building Block Options



Leadership	Leadership training targeted to people who are interested in taking a more active role in the community
Economy	Program Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Business Retention and Expansion Program▪ Building an Entrepreneurial Friendly Community▪ Youth Entrepreneurship Program
Placemaking	Program Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arts, culture and historic preservation in building vibrant communities▪ Improving downtown or other public spaces▪ Building a local foods system

Capstone Activities



Benefits to Your Community



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Training and technical assistance from state agency (OCRA) and university professionals



Access to a well-trained community coach



High quality data prepared on your community or county



Top-notch “Building Block” programs to address priority needs



Seed funding for your Pathfinder Project



More people caring and involved in the community

HCI Application Process

The Application



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Applications are available as a Microsoft Word fillable form at www.in.gov/ocra



As you write your application, be sure to visit the FAQ sheet also available on OCRA's website



If you have questions about the HCI application or program, address them to GSchomacker@ocra.in.gov

Applications should be submitted Electronically to GSchomacker@ocra.in.gov

Application Process Timeline



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Date	Activity
December 1	Completed application due to OCRA (submitted electronically) by 5 pm EST
December 8	Semi-finalists announced
December 15-19	Site visits held by State Coordinating Team representatives. Community Forum organized by local HCI coordinating team.
Early-Mid January 2015	Selected communities announced by Lieutenant Governor Sue Ellspermann

How to Compose a Competitive Application

How applications will be scored



Item	Maximum Points Possible
Q1: Description of your community	15
Q2: Discussion of major benefits of being part of the HCI program	25
Q3: Discussion of challenges & obstacles and how community will address them	15
Q4: Description of how HCI involvement will contribute to a strategic plan	20
Q5: Discussion of building block your community might implement	15
Q6: Diversity, depth and commitment of the proposed HCI Coordinating Team (includes information gathered from the site visit)	50
Overall Quality and Completeness of Proposal	10
Total Points Possible	150

Question 1 - 15 Points



- Q1.** Provide a brief overview of the community that you are requesting be part of the HCI Program. Specifically, describe the geographic boundaries of the community, the size and other relevant features of its population, some of its major economic activities and other characteristics that are important to note about your community.
- Identify the **specific geographic area** that you are including as part of your community (is your community a formally recognized geo-political area, or is one you've defined specifically for HCI?).
 - Is your 'community' composed of more than one city or town, or a specific county? If so, tell us about it.
 - Specify the number of residents in your proposed HCI community. (Remember that eligible communities have **25,000 residents or less**.)
 - **Tell the story of your community.** Some ideas:
 - **Socio-economic Information:** Key socio-economic facts (important economic indicators (key industries, employment/unemployment); economic trends; median income.
 - **Demographic/Population Information:** Population growth/decline; changes in the population
 - **Opportunities and Challenges** associated with the trends.
 - **Other aspects of the community** that you want to include to help tell an accurate story about your community.



Question 2 - 25 Points



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Q2. What does your community see as the major benefits of being part of the HCI program?

- You may focus on the **existing community assets you would like to build on** or develop further (these may include financial resources, built infrastructure, political willingness to collaborate, social networks, cultural diversity, leadership potential, natural amenities or others.)
- You could identify specific **opportunities to build a more vibrant community** in the areas of leadership entrepreneurship and placemaking.
- How might HCI **improve the quality of life** in the community or the ability of the community to address current/emerging challenges/opportunities? Will it help mobilize a more diverse group of residents and sectors?
- Be upfront. It is worthwhile to identify specific challenges (opportunities for growth!) in the community, but be certain to **specify how the HCI program can address these issues** (see Question 3).



Question 3 - 15 Points



Q3. What obstacles or challenges might your team face as it seeks to launch the HCI effort in your community? How does your team intend to address these obstacles or challenges?

- **Identify specific obstacles:** Be as precise as possible, but avoid identifying specific people, associations or institutions.
- Every team and every community faces its own unique challenges. Be certain to **present a strategy to overcome each of the key challenges** you anticipate might impede the success of HCI.
- Feel free to offer an historical perspective, but be certain to connect what has happened in the past to the present and **what your HCI team is striving towards in the future.**



Question 4 - 20 Points



- Q4.** Does your community have a strategic plan that has been developed within the last three years?
- If YES, how will your involvement in the HCI program support your strategic plan?
 - If NO, will participation in the HCI program be helpful to your community in developing a strategic plan? How?
 - **Identify any existing strategic plans** by name and provide a description of the key points of the plan. If the plan is available online, please provide the URL.
 - Identify **specific points of your community's strategic plan that may relate to the HCI program**. For example, how does your strategic plan address leadership, economic development and/or placemaking? Or, discuss how your strategic planning process addressed the needs of diverse group of residents and sectors.
 - If you do not have a strategic plan, identify **specific ways that HCI can contribute to developing a strategic plan**. In the past, what has prevented your community from successfully creating a strategic plan? How can HCI help your community overcome these barriers?

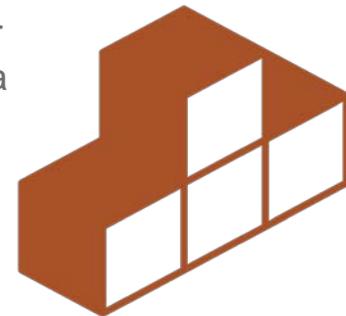


Question 5 - 15 Points



Q5. HCI has three major building blocks that participating communities can consider for implementation in their community (leadership, economy, placemaking). At this point, which of these building blocks does your team feel is the top priority for your community and why? If you hope to engage in more than one block, describe your rationale for choosing two and how they will be connected. *(NOTE: We strongly recommend that you focus on only one block at a time).*

- **Be certain to identify the one block in which you are most interested.**
(NOTE: It is recommended you only engage in one block at a time).
- **What is it about this block that interests your community?** Does it fill an existing community need? Does it build upon an existing community effort? Does it build on an existing set of community assets?
- The HCI State Coordinating Team would like to get a feel for your preliminary interest in a chosen block. Please discuss, in detail, the **key factors that influenced this decision**. Remember, you will have the opportunity to change your focus after your community has assessed key community data and gauged public opinion through a community forum.



Question 6 - 50 Points



Q6. All HCI communities are required to have a committed group of people that will serve on a coordinating team that will be responsible for guiding the launch and overall success of the HCI program. Please provide the names and affiliations of 12-15 people who will be part of your HCI team. Please remember that it is important to demonstrate active involvement by a diverse mix of people and organizations in your community.

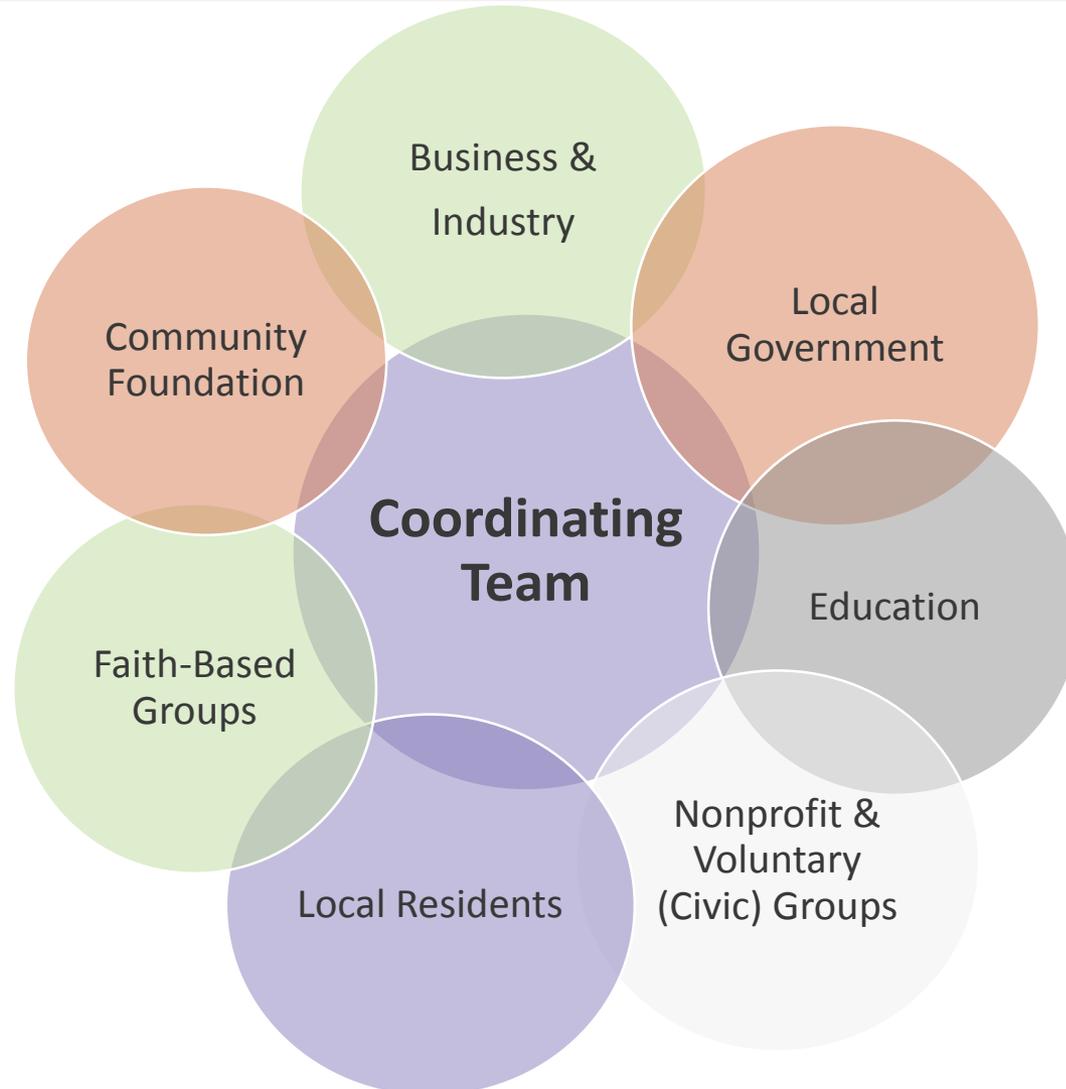
- A **diverse team is vital to the success of HCI.**
- Select committed individuals to represent your HCI coordinating team. The application process is your opportunity **to demonstrate your community's collaboration and willingness to work as a team for an extended period of time.**
- Include a **signed letter of commitment** from each of the proposed coordinating team members.
- Remember, during the foundation phase of HCI, the local coordinating team will **evaluate their team diversity** and have the opportunity to invite more individuals to join the team.



A Strong Coordinating Team?



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Overall Completeness of Proposal- 10 Points



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- Please carefully read all of the accompanying HCI materials!
- Prepare a well-written and proofread document.
- Be specific and concise, as much as possible.
- Tell the story of your community as if the team reviewing and scoring your application has never heard of your community and know nothing about the basic facts about your community.
- Keep in mind the building blocks and key components of the HCI program and the importance of diversity, collaboration, and efforts to enhance the quality of life for people in your community.
- Pay attention to the application scoring matrix; a more heavily weighted question should involve a more in depth answer.
- Try to use persuasive language. Your application should convince the review team that your community is the most prepared to benefit from its participation in HCI.



Question and Answer Session with the State HCI Planning Team

Questions?



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If you have a question now, use the chat box to submit your question.

If you have a question after the webinar, please submit them to Geoff Schomacker at GSchomacker@ocra.IN.gov.

Applications due **December 1 by 5:00 p.m.**

Applications **should be submitted electronically** to GSchomacker@ocra.IN.gov.



Q & A with Webinar Participants



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- Q** Webinar participant asked: Are HTC communities eligible to be grandfathered in to the HCI pilot program?
- A** Because the HCI program is an all new program, not an extension of the HTC program, none of the past HTC communities will be grandfathered into the Hometown Collaboration Initiative. However, HTC communities are eligible to apply to the HCI program. Their application will be evaluated using the HCI scoring guidelines being used to evaluate all other proposals.



Q & A with Webinar Participants



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- Q** Webinar participant asked: How many communities do you anticipate selecting for the HCI pilot program?
- A** We anticipate selecting five communities to participate in the HCI pilot program that will launch in January of 2015.



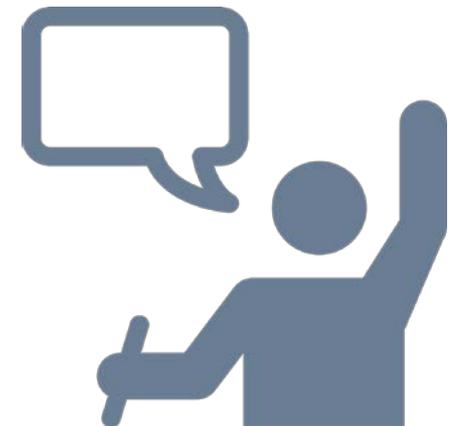
Q & A with Webinar Participants



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Q Webinar participant asked: When and where will community trainings and workshops take place?

A Workshops will take place at a convenient local venue in each selected community. The HCI program will begin in early 2015 and workshops and trainings will occur on a regular basis throughout 2015.



Q & A with Webinar Participants



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- Q** • Webinar participant asked: Will collaborating communities receive extra points on their application for promoting regionalism?

A While we encourage communities to work in partnership if it makes sense, it will not result in extra points being awarded to the applicant.



Q & A with Webinar Participants



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Q Webinar participant asked: Who will serve as coaches for communities selected to be part of HCI?

A Purdue University Extension and Ball State University have assembled a team of highly-skilled professional staff who will serve as the HCI coaches. The building blocks selected by the state and HCI teams as well as the location of the HCI pilot community will determine who will be the assigned coach.

