

Indiana Stellar Pathways Program



Strategic Investment Plan Requirements

2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Summary.....	3
Strategic Investment Plan Minimum Requirements	5
Submission Format	11
Scoring Criteria	11
Contact Information	11



PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Stellar Pathways program is a multi-agency, multi-million-dollar investment initiative led by the Office of Community and Rural Affairs. The program works with communities within a county boundary on a shared vision for community and economic development, promotes local and regional partnerships, and assists in implementing sustainable solutions to challenges facing Indiana's rural communities. The Stellar Pathways program will provide resources for transformative quality of place projects as well as community and regional improvements by fostering enhanced regional planning, a collaborative approach, and resource-rich partnerships.

The partnering state agencies and corresponding programs are:

- The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)
 - Rural Federal Aid Program - \$3,000,000
- The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA)
 - HOME Investment Partnerships Program
 - Homebuyer and Home Rental Construction
 - Each CHDO is able to receive up to approximately \$1,500,000.
- The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)
 - Community Development Block Grant - \$8,000,000
- The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)
 - Rural Health and Wellness Grant - \$75,000
- The Indiana Destination Development Corporation (IDDC)
 - Cooperative Marketing - \$50,000-100,000
- The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
 - Food System Grants - \$200,000
- The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
 - Bonus Points Land and Water Conservation Fund – 5% eligible bonus points
 - Bonus Points Historic Preservation Fund – 20 eligible bonus points

Finalist communities will produce a Strategic Investment Plan that will identify projects and programs to be completed during the Stellar designation period.

Projects included in a Strategic Investment Plan typically represent the following areas of interest:

- Transportation
- Health
- Housing
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Infrastructure



Regions are encouraged to identify complimentary projects as a part of the Strategic Investment Plan. Complimentary projects include but are not limited to:

- Green space and aesthetics
- Quality of life improvements
- Education
- Public safety
- Job creation
- Youth engagement
- Retaining and attracting new residents and visitors

The Stellar Pathways program will designate two regions as Stellar Pathways designees. The designation will include access to set-aside state funds to complete specific projects over the four-year designation period as program rules and regulations allow. The two designees will be able to apply for **up to half** of the above listed amounts. **Additionally, the number of state-funded projects is limited to available funding and up to the discretion of each participating state agency.**

THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN (SIP)

A Strategic Investment Plan is an economic development tool to identify economic, business, and developmental programs and projects that may qualify for targeted funding to accomplish key regional goals.

The Strategic Investment Plan should be designed to attract the attention of the target audience (investors and grant administrators), demonstrate the opportunities for investment within communities, engage community members in project and program development, and feature the region's supporting benefits, assets, and resources.

EXPECTATIONS

The Strategic Investment Plan is a group effort and will require coordination among community members to complete. Local committee members, in collaboration with any potential outside consulting firm, will be responsible for providing the information for the Strategic Investment Plan.



STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Indiana’s Stellar Pathways program is requesting a Strategic Investment Plan detailing the region’s comprehensive community revitalization strategies over the four-year Stellar Pathways timeline, which is part of the competitive process. Strategic Investment Plans must be received by the deadline of **Nov. 1, 2024**, and follow the Stellar Pathways Strategic Investment Plan minimum requirements format.

There are four steps to the Strategic Investment Plan process:

1. Mandatory attendance at one of the Stellar Pathways program workshops.
2. Selection as a Stellar Pathway finalist by the Stellar State Team.
3. Completion and submission of a Strategic Investment Plan meeting all requirements by the due date.
4. A presentation in Indianapolis for each of the finalist regions.

Presentations should be as detailed as possible to help articulate the Strategic Investment Plan. The 75 minute in-person presentation will include:

- A presentation of the proposed plan and project.
- A video, if so desired.
- Attendance of key leaders, CEOs, and relevant organizations and committee members.

Presentation Dates:

- Tuesday, Dec. 3
- Friday, Dec. 6

Although more information may be provided by finalists, successful Strategic Investment Plans must meet the following **minimum** requirements:

Cover Page

- Photograph of the region
- Title

General Information

- Brief Executive Summary
- Section should also include:
 - The lead applicant (county or nonprofit county leader), cities and towns that are actively a part of the Strategic Investment Plan.
 - Primary contact information (Name, Title, Email, Phone Number, etc.)
 - Secondary contact information (Name, Title, Email, Phone Number, etc.)
 - Senior elected official information (Name, Title, Email, Phone Number, etc.)



Current State of the Region

- Provide a description and assessment of the region's participation in the Stellar Pathways process up to this point.
- Region goals for designation, mission statement and vision statement. Include information on how and when each was developed.
- Key regional assets. Describe how the region plans to incorporate its assets in future development opportunities.

Current Momentum

- Describe the key accomplishments that each community within the region would like to achieve with the Stellar Pathways designation.
- Provide a chart of current projects for the participating entities. This chart should include projects that are currently in development with completion dates within the next five (5) years.
 - For each project, write a two-to-four sentence summary of the project; include approximate dollar amounts of investments by source such as a private, philanthropic, local, state and federal.
- Describe how the Stellar Pathways designation will enable the region to further implement the region's goals.

Capacity

- Describe the capacity of the participating entities to implement projects over the five-year Stellar Pathway designation period.
- Describe the development team and its ability to implement a multi-project plan, provide examples of past successes.
 - **Note: The development team should be formed with diverse and balanced representation of the region's stakeholders and should include, but not be limited to, business owners, residents, corporations, institutions, etc.**
- Document the services of a grant administrator and/or successfully completed projects in the past three years using state and/or federal grant funds.

Engagement Process

- Outline the community engagement strategy used to gather input from citizens.
 - Demonstrate how the development team engaged the whole region and all sectors of its population.
 - Describe any challenges to engagement and how the region worked together to overcome them.
 - Describe who attended the engagement activities. Describe who from the committee attended those engagement activities.



- Demonstrate how engagement activities were made accessible to community members.
- Describe the process of reporting to the region the results of the community engagement activities.
- Discuss the overall communication plan and how it was implemented throughout the process.
 - Include how the region and participating entities will continue the momentum of community engagement into the future.
- Provide a description of how the designation will be used to market the participating communities and the overall county to attract residents and businesses.

Project and Program Identification

- Provide a list of the intended projects and demonstrated reasonableness of project scope:
 - Describe the process the county used to prioritize projects and programs.
 - Document and support the level of need for each project and the significance of each project in the overall development efforts of the region. Documentation should reference various data sources as well as community engagement efforts. Include a description of how proposed projects will leverage additional resources. If applicable, explain how the proposed projects and/or programs leverage additional investments within immediate proximity of another investment.
 - **Note: Projects should be reasonable in scope of work to be completed. The projects should be able to be completed within four years of designation. Projects should be practical in relation to the community's operating budget. Entities should plan projects and programs with set-aside funding; however, regions are not required to use all set-aside funding.**
 - **Note: More detailed information on each project and program should be provided in Appendix C and D to ensure shovel-readiness.**
- Summary construction project details should include:
 - Project name
 - Location information
 - Brief description
 - Alignment with at least one of the Stellar Pathways goals: transformative quality of place, promoting community wellness, and/or strengthening local economies.
 - Relevant community engagement about proposed project.
 - Key partners supporting the implementation of the project.
 - Amenities/infrastructure
 - Water service, wastewater service, gas service, electric service, high speed communication service provider, proximity to highways, proximity to railroads, etc.
 - Budget
 - Project timeline
- Summary program details should include:



- Program title
- Brief description
- Alignment with at least one of the Stellar Pathways goals: transformative quality of place, promoting community wellness, and/or strengthening local economies.
- Relevant community engagement about proposed program.
- Timeline
- Budget
- Scope of work
- Key partner organizations supporting the implementation of the program.

Implementation

- Outline how progress will be measured, including:
 - Define 3-5 key performance indicators to track during the Stellar Pathways designation period.
 - Include links or attach documents illustrating data points used to create each metric.
 - Describe the method and frequency of reporting progress to both the region and the State partners.
 - Describe who will report the progress.
 - Discuss how often progress will be reported.
 - Discuss how the strategic investment plan will continue to move forward without the state partnership.

Sustainability

- Demonstrate the region's ability to sustain the Stellar Pathways development team past the five-year designation period.
 - Demonstrate who will be responsible for sustaining the projects or programs.
 - Describe the sustainability plan of the projects or programs.
 - Discuss how the region will continue to financially sustain the projects or programs.
- Describe the processes in place that will allow the region to continue to move projects forward; include new or updated projects as others are completed or adjustments are needed and engage new individuals in the process.
- Provide financial documentation supporting the sustainability and maintenance of the proposed projects (pro forma, user rates, available public financing, other appropriate funding mechanisms, etc.).

Key Acknowledgements

- Section that highlights the contributors to the content, creation, and design of the Strategic Investment Plan.



Appendix A: Demographic summary of the region.

- This should include, but is not limited to:
 - Key population features
 - Such as age structure, population change, educational attainment, etc.
 - Economic base
 - Such as major employers, main industrial activity, etc.
 - Key anchor institutions in the community/county
 - Such as public libraries, hospitals/clinics, community centers, museums, public schools, higher education institutions, etc.

Appendix B: Community Engagement Results

Appendix C: Comprehensive Construction Project Descriptions

- **Note: Each proposed project should have a detailed description to assist the review committee in evaluating the shovel-readiness of the proposed project.**
 1. Current Conditions:
 - a. Describe the current conditions.
 - i. For example: for a public facilities program, describe the state of any existing facilities and/or describe how the community has operated without a facility
 - b. Current photos with captions illustrating conditions.
 - c. Known environmental/site hazards.
 - d. Historical significance of the facility, if applicable.
 - e. Socioeconomic factors in the target area that could affect (positively or negatively) use of the facility.
 - f. Physical assets and resources that could be used to support the facility.
 - g. Service gaps and needs that exist in the target area.
 - h. Financial status of any existing facility.
 2. Recommended Option for Implementation:
 - a. Briefly describe at least two alternatives to the non-recommended options and why they are not the preferred option.
 - b. Scope of work for the proposed project
 - c. Renderings and recommended improvements
 - d. Site elevation drawings
 - e. Maps, pictures or illustrations
 - f. Site/land acquisition considerations (including: any access/egress issues, land requirements etc.)
 - g. Five-year pro-forma for operations
 - h. Projected number of users
 - i. Budget (including potential funding sources both private and public)



- j. Implementation timeline
- k. List of possible partnerships
- l. Potential construction problems
- m. Sustainability considerations

Appendix D: Comprehensive Program Descriptions

- **Note: Each proposed program should have a detailed description to assist the review committee in evaluating the implementation readiness of the proposed program.**
 1. Current Conditions:
 - a. Describe the proposed program. Is it an existing program?
 - If so, is this an expansion of programming?
 - If not, describe how the community has operated without this program and why they need to create this program.
 - b. Current photos with captions illustrating conditions
 - c. Service gaps and needs existing in the target area
 - d. Financial status of the existing program, if applicable
 - e. Socioeconomic factors in the target area that could positively or negatively affect use of the program
 2. Recommended Option for Implementation:
 - a. Scope of Work
 - b. Description of how the program will be managed
 - c. Local selection criteria for awards and/or to access to the program
 - d. Well-defined management processes and roles for the community and program manager (or sub-recipient)
 - e. Strategic outreach/promotion plans for the program
 - f. Outline of how any funds awarded will be managed
 - g. Draft Program Materials
 - h. Projected number of users
 - i. Budget
 - j. Implementation timeline
 - k. List of potential funding sources (both private and public)
 - l. List of possible partnerships
 - m. Potential implementation/execution problems
 - n. Sustainability considerations

Appendix E: Maps

- Provide a full color map of the overall project target area for the entire region.
 - Identify regional/partner boundaries on the overall map.



- Provide individual community maps with the following items identified:
 - Past projects
 - Current ongoing projects
 - Proposed projects
 - Complimentary projects

Appendix F: Feasibility matrix

- Note: Use the “Feasibility Matrix” example document on OCRA’s website.

Appendix G: Media and publicity related to the Stellar Pathways process

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Hard copies will not be accepted. Stellar Pathways finalists shall submit the SIP through a secure document sharing service (i.e. Dropbox, Google Drive etc.). Additionally, finalists may request a link to a shared OneDrive folder set up by the State of Indiana to upload the final SIP, if requested more than 48 hours in advance of the submission deadline. All submissions or requests should be directed to the Stellar Pathways email address (stellarcommunities@ocra.in.gov).

SCORING CRITERIA

Multiple state agencies are included in the scoring process to ensure input across disciplines and expertise. The Stellar Pathways State Team consists of members from the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, the Indiana Destination Development Corporation, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the Indiana State Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Transportation, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and other relevant entities, as needed.

Scoring criteria to be considered include:

- Plan comprehensiveness
- Proposed projects’ impact
- Maximizing local and private leverage
- Alignment with eligible funding sources
- Investment need
- Capacity to administer and deliver
- Long-term viability and sustainability of the interventions
- Financial capacity to manage the project
- Connection to community engagement and needs

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions should be directed to the Indiana Stellar Pathways staff at stellarcommunities@ocra.in.gov.