



LUCHA

CHICAGO

PROJECT SUMMARY

LUCHA's Housing Opportunities Program helps individuals and families find and keep good homes through its HUD-approved housing counseling services. But, in 2018, the program went through an intense transition period with staff changes and restructuring. In the aftermath, LUCHA realized they were facing a variety of issues: their client records were incomplete and out of date, they needed a more rigorous program model with concrete goals and outcomes, and they needed to cross-train their housing counselors. With an official review quickly approaching to determine if they could keep their HUD approval, the team realized they needed outside help. They joined Housing Action Illinois' Intermediary network, giving them access to the hands-on expertise of Housing Action's Capacity Building Specialists.

THE SOLUTION

First, Housing Action Capacity Building Specialist Bibian Cristino and the LUCHA team reviewed the agency's strengths and areas of concern. One major concern was clear: adherence to HUD guidelines and proper use of the Client Management System, a critical tool for tracking clients and program outcomes. Without proper data entry and tracking, clients could slip through the cracks, and LUCHA wouldn't know for sure how successful their program was. Another problem was variance in staff knowledge and skills; LUCHA wanted to be sure that every housing counselor could help any client who walked through the door.

LUCHA's Director of Programs declared it an "all hands on deck" moment. The entire team worked closely with Bibian for three months, spending seven days together for in-person coaching, strategizing during 10 phone conferences, and spending countless hours reviewing physical and digital files. Together, they were able to assemble and submit more than 1,000 pages of pre-audit documents to HUD. When the day came for the review, they were ready. On November 8, officials reviewed the program, found the files in excellent order, and granted LUCHA an unconditional three-year re-approval as a HUD Housing Counseling Agency.

"Bibian and Housing Action Illinois brought a sense of structure, rigor, and resources that fully supported our ongoing restructuring process," says Maria Campos, Senior Housing Counselor. "She was honest, direct, and provided valuable guidance."



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

LOCATION

Chicago

TIMELINE

3+ months

SKILL BUILDING

LUCHA continues to rigorously abide by national industry standards and guidelines as they serve their clients and the community

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Two of LUCHA's housing counselors have obtained national HUD certification, guaranteeing they can continue to serve clients

2018 LUCHA PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Hosted **28 housing education seminars; 925 clients completed homebuyer education**
- Helped create **154 homeowners**
- Counseled **211 clients** on pre-purchase and **106 clients** on post-purchase homeownership
- Built **financial literacy skills with 276 clients**
- Helped clients secure **\$18,671,100 in mortgage capital** and **\$1,300,815 in subsidies to assist with closing and down payment costs**



“Access to knowledge and information is vital to every family’s success. LUCHA prides itself in meeting every client where they are, preparing them, and guiding them with high quality housing counseling services. We provide services to our clients with the same care as if we were providing services to members of our own families.”

ISAIAS SOLIS, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

ABOUT LUCHA

LUCHA believes that housing is a human right. The organization was founded in 1982 to stabilize the neighborhoods of the Northwest side of Chicago and to champion the housing interests of residents. Since then, LUCHA has organized community members to fight for better housing services from both public and private sectors.

HOUSING ACTION ILLINOIS

Housing Action Illinois is a statewide coalition that has led the movement to protect affordable housing and end homelessness in Illinois for more than 30 years. Our 160+ member organizations include housing counseling agencies, homeless service providers, developers of affordable housing and policy advocates. We bring everyone together to work toward our vision of an Illinois where everyone has a stable, good home.

LEARN MORE

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Housing Action Illinois

A stronger Illinois begins at home