



COSCAR'S MISSION AND GOALS

For over 25 years, COSCAR has promoted the value and importance of state involvement in community development, economic development and affordable housing programs. During that time, COSCAR has positioned itself as the premier national association charged with advocating and enhancing the leadership role of states in community development. COSCAR's vision of community development encompasses community development in its broadest context, to include the full range of community development issues, affordable housing and homelessness, economic development, infrastructure, growth issues, technology and transportation in urban, suburban and rural communities.

COSCAR will seek to support, facilitate and communicate this comprehensive approach of community development to the COSCAR membership as well as to elected and appointed officials and state and federal policy makers.

The mission of COSCAR is to:

- **Advocate** for the common community development goals of the states;
- **Develop** policies and recommendations on community development issues;
- **Keep** members informed on federal and state legislative and administrative developments that affect them;
- **Enhance** the capacity of states to deal effectively and comprehensively with community development issues;
- **Ensure** the availability of community development expertise to members;
- **Encourage** and assist states in the development and implementation of effective community development programs; and
- **Facilitate** the exchange of information about programs and achievements among states and act as a clearinghouse for community development organizations.

Through implementation of this Strategic Plan, COSCDA will seek to:

- **Strengthen** COSCDA's role as an advocate for community development;
- **Increase** COSCDA membership outreach efforts as well as communication between the Board/Staff and Members;
- **Establish/Undertake** activities to enhance COSCDA's value to members;
- **Increase** communications and the relationship with COSCDA Partners;
- **Develop and Implement** a Financial Plan that enhances COSCDA's financial viability and stability; and
- **Increase awareness** of the importance of performance accountability to COSCDA membership.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

ADVOCACY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Goal #1:

Strengthen COSCDA's role as an advocate for community development

Immediate Priorities

- Emphasize COSCDA's members' strengths in administering federal and state community development programs.
- Increase outreach to members of Congress and the Administration.
- Engage member agency decision makers in direct outreach activities to highlight their role in advocacy at the state and federal level.
- Validate the usefulness of COSCDA's Federal and State Data Profiles which detail state investment in community development, housing and homelessness activities.
- Advocate for consistent and adequate resources for key community development housing and homelessness programs.
- Create and post an Advocacy Bulletin Board to the Members Only section of the COSCDA web page.

Goal #2:

Continue to Enhance COSCDA's Committee Process to Formulate Policy Development.

Immediate Priorities

- Ensure that members review COSCDA policy positions throughout the year.
- Utilize COSCDA Committee structure to develop policy in key programmatic areas.

Secondary Priorities

- Update COSCDA Legislative and Regulatory advocacy document which highlights the COSCDA priorities.
- Form alliances with other advocacy organizations to work on areas of mutual concern.

Goal #3:

Develop targeted communications and establish/undertake activities that improve the relationships with COSCDA Partners, which include but are not limited to federal government agencies, national, state and local community development organizations and national non-profit organizations.

Immediate Priorities

- Capitalize on COSCDA member relationships with key staff at federal agencies and congressional committees to continually highlight the key role states play in community development.
- Become proactive relative to partners' legislative activities.
- Pursue common interest areas to strengthen effectiveness of message.
- Increase board communications with Governors of states to increase their knowledge of, and support of, COSCDA and its mission.
- Establish stronger alliance with NGA by at a minimum, inviting the CEO of the National Governors' Association (NGA) to meet with COSCDA Board at least annually.
- Actively participate in NGA meetings.
- Add Governors and their staff, to include the Washington Representatives to COSCDA's mailing list for receipt of newsletters, press releases and other publications.
- Increase communications with potential sponsors of COSCDA events including corporate sponsors such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, National Association of Home Builders as well as financial institutions.
- Facilitate the coordination of federal agencies involved in community development.
- Utilize COSCDA policy to continually communicate with Congress and key federal agencies.

Secondary Priorities

- Distribute COSCDA newsletter and other communications to key staff members at HUD, USDA, EPA and the SBA at the federal and state levels to inform them on how states are operating the federal and state funded community development programs.
- Link partners to COSCDA's web site on an exchange basis.
- Invite key political appointees and career staff at federal agencies to participate in COSCDA sponsored conferences and seminars.
- Serve as a clearinghouse on state community development best practices.
- Encourage COSCDA members to form relationships with entitlement communities.

- Establish alliances with other advocacy organizations and potential sponsors via newsletters, participation in their conferences, invitation to COSCDA conferences, establishing relationships with key community development staff.

INTERNAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal #1:

Enhance Organizational Structure to advance COSCDA vision and mission

Immediate Priorities

- Rename the Initiatives and Innovations Committee which will serve to broaden the range of interest for COSCDA members and highlight the role of states in community development as well as to provide a formal mechanism for COSCDA members to share innovative program and policies from states and to recommend policy to the board on cutting edge community development ideas.
- Serve as a resource to bring new ideas, resources and increased capacity to state community development activities.

Secondary Priorities

- Ensure that no committee or subcommittee meeting conflicts with any other committee meeting at the Annual or Legislative Conferences.
- Hold Board meetings at conferences at times accessible to members.
- Ensure a direct and continued link between the committee structure and the Board of Directors by having each committee or subcommittee co-chaired by a member of the Board and a subject matter practitioner.
- Establish a clearinghouse of information on community development programs and have staff research sources of funds to support this activity.
- Foster new policy development in key community development areas.
- Utilize newly named Committee to highlight innovative community development programs and projects being undertaken by states and ensure the information is distributed to Congressional, state and federal agency personnel.
- Communicate state best practices to COSCDA members, Congress and Governors via the internet, workshops and newsletters.

MEMBER SERVICES

Goal #1:

Increase Board/Member and Staff Communications to membership

Immediate Priorities

- Communicate contents of COSCDA Strategic Plan Goals to membership.
- Review COSCDA Strategic Plan annually with members during the Legislative Conference.
- Utilize COSCDA members' regional meetings as a training and technical assistance delivery vehicle.

- Utilize “Issue Pages” on the web page to provide members information on specific programs.
- Elevate COSCDA’s role of representing multiple community development interests.
- Develop and sustain a core membership.
- Continue to produce the COSCDA *National Line* on at least a monthly basis.

Secondary Priorities

- Increase utilization of COSCDA Webpage as an interactive communications tool with members.
- Utilize COSCDA Alerts to communicate with members on issues requiring immediate response.
- Continue to conduct monthly Board of Directors’ conference calls.
- Increase opportunities for leadership within COSCDA by identifying and encouraging active knowledgeable members to serve on committees tasks forces and the Board of Directors.
- Develop and institute co-training with HUD on key programs.
- Investigate feasibility of conducting video conferencing and video training.

Goal #2:

Prepare Financial Plan that enhances COSCDA's financial viability and stability.

Immediate Priorities

- Develop financial plan that will facilitate COSCDA’s self sufficiency and predictable funding sources that will not compromise the independence of the Association.
- Ensure adequate resources to hire and maintain a core staff of 4 to 6 full time professionals appropriate to the Board’s approved operations plan within the next three years.
- Ensure that COSCDA retains a highly competent and diverse staff.
- Explore ways to increase non-dues revenues.
- Seek consistent sponsorships for conferences.
- Investigate the possibility of developing workshops and seminars on community development issues and charge fees.

Goal #3:

Enhance and Expand Member Training

Immediate Priorities

- Assess COSCDA member training needs for core COSCDA programs.
- Design training that is entrepreneurial.
- Enhance CDBG Bootcamp.
- Serve as a broker to states on training related issues.

Secondary Priorities

- Seek HUD funding for identified CPD training programs.
- Create an advanced community development administrators training program.
- Explore electronic and alternate training delivery methods.
- Explore partnerships with other agencies to develop and deliver training.

Goal #4

**Retain and expand membership through the delivery of superior quality services
Secure all possible state members**

Immediate Priorities

- Maximize member participation in COSCDA events and activities.
- Expand outreach to state administrators of the HOME and ESG programs.
- Increase marketing efforts to non-members.
- Engage COSCDA members in ways to expand affiliate membership.

Secondary Priorities

- Continue to promote benefits of COSCDA membership to current members.

COSCDAs strategic planning process is ongoing. Board, Committees and staff will implement yearly action plans to accomplish the priorities identified under each goal. COSCDA members will be kept abreast as activities are implemented and progress made toward achievement of these goals. In addition, the COSCDA Board will review the plan annually.