What is the HCI Program?

The Hometown Collaboration Initiative is an exciting program for communities of under 25,000 people that want to expand their pipeline of local leaders, strengthen and expand jobs by building on existing economic assets, and embrace placemaking strategies that focus on improving the attractiveness and quality of life of their hometowns. A core principle of the HCI is that broad-based input and buy-in is vital to the long-term success and sustainability of the program. During the HCI program, each participating community will participate in a foundation block where they will learn more about their community assets and determine which of the three building blocks they wish to pursue.

Foundation | Organizing and Strengthening Our HCI Team

During this block, your team will be introduced to the HCI framework and the basic principles of community development. The foundation block will consist of five educational and activity based modules which will cover topics including organizing your HCI team; polishing your teamwork, leadership, and collaboration skills; studying community data; discovering local assets; and learning about the program building blocks. The final module in this block will use the Strategic Doing™ process to decide which building block is right for your community.

Building Block 1 | Developing Our Hometown Leadership Pipeline

This block is designed to help your team build relationships through effective communication. Your community will grow in their skills and knowledge of how to lead and direct community actions. During this block, your team will work to recruit a diverse mix of local residents who want to step up and build their leadership skills. This block has six modules that will focus on topics including: effective ways to work with others, manage group conflicts, identify local leadership needs, and take action on priority issues.

Building Block 2 | Strengthening our Hometown Economy

Although industrial recruitment plays a dominant role in the economic development strategies of most communities, the truth is that most new jobs are built on the assets that already exist in the community. HCI focuses on launching programs that build on the economic strengths of communities, including approaches for retaining and growing existing businesses, creating more entrepreneurial-friendly communities, and investing in tomorrow's business leaders through youth entrepreneurship. As part of this building block, you will have the option to choose from one of these three program thrusts.

Building Block 3 | Focusing on Our Hometown’s Natural and Built Resources

This building block examines ways to build on your community’s existing built and natural resources by pursuing placemaking strategies. During this building block, your hometown will take stock of its physical components and explore the integration of arts, culture, and historic preservation efforts to revitalize your community. Your community will choose from three program paths including: focusing on community design, creating vital spaces, or rebuilding your local food system.

Capstone | Keeping the Momentum Going

Each community selected for HCI will participate in the capstone block. During this block, your team will learn ways to keep the team energized and working on longer-term goals. Your team will also plan a shorter-term Pathfinder Project that places your community on the exciting path for achieving its goals.