Mission and Vision
The Ohio CDC Association (OCDCA) is a statewide membership organization that fosters vibrant neighborhoods and improves the quality of life in all communities through advocacy and capacity building of our member agencies. OCDCA's vision is the creation of a community development environment that comprehensively improves life opportunities for all residents.

Executive Summary
This strategic plan is the collaborative effort of OCDCA’s board of trustees and staff assisted by Chris Kloth of ChangeWorks of the Heartland. A special acknowledgment goes to the Personnel, Leadership and Organization Development (PLOD) committee. The following summarizes five goals and resulting tactics developed in 2016 to guide the organization from 2017 – 2019 in achieving its mission and vision.

Goal 1: Strengthen member capacity
This goal covers keeping a “big-picture” eye on OCDCA’s key activities such as training, funding, advocacy and other programs and services through which the mission is accomplished. We will:
- Continue the recently initiated “case development” process to create and fund new programmatic initiatives that deliver resources and opportunities to the membership while bolstering existing and creating new funding partnerships
- Build member-to-member networks for knowledge transfer such as mentoring, peer-to-peer training or member exchange groups considering digital and in-person platforms
- Explore new programmatic approaches, partnerships and strategies to support and expand financial empowerment beyond individual development accounts
- Continue to enhance the effectiveness and outcomes of OCDCA core programs: AmeriCorps VISTA, Ohio Microbusiness Development Grant Program and the Individual Development Account program
- Explore strategic opportunities to expand member benefits in ways that are financially sustainable, including consideration of how to leverage new and existing programs
- Continue to advocate for appropriate levels of state and federal government funding that can be accessed by the membership such as the expansion of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund
- Successfully implement OCDCA’s newest grants – the Creative Placemaking Immersion Project (2017) funded by National Endowment for the Arts and the Rural Community Development Initiative (2017 – 2019) funded by USDA Rural Development

Goal 2: Create a unified voice for CDCs
OCDCA’s members are its greatest strength and resource. The membership is a key resource in building political and legislative power. Building the collective energy of a diverse membership, with varying self-interests, for the well-being of the whole is critical for increasing advocacy success. Increasing consensus on shared interests will strengthen the power of OCDCA’s voice as an advocate for its members. We will:
- Develop, implement and advocate a policy agenda consistent with the mission and member challenges that is also proactively promoting legislation and/or regulatory action
- Increase our capacity to advocate for our policy agenda by strengthening member engagement, advocacy skills, member tools and leveraging member relationships with the General Assembly
- Explore the creation of a coordinated summer visit campaign for members to share their community development successes with state legislators in their respective districts
- The 2016 presidential election has increased unpredictability to federal resources and regulations that may necessitate unprecedented response to threats and opportunities from the association, members and stakeholders
- Continue to identify the evolving needs and challenges of the membership
- Continue to make the conservative and business cases for community development
- Maintain and strengthen collaborative policy alliances to advocate for pro-active legislation and/or resource protection
- Expand member engagement and involvement through new means at the annual conference, regional member meetings and the annual business meeting
Goal 3: Maintain and further develop branding, public relations, and internal communications to raise awareness of CDCs and the value of community development

It is understood that much of the public is unaware of the impactful work of the membership in communities across Ohio. Whether it be community economic development, affordable housing, local food access, financial empowerment or community engagement, it is important that the powerful stories of CDC successes are effectively communicated to appropriate audiences. To increase member capacity, financial stability, and to create a unified voice it is important that OCDCA continue to dedicate resources to clarify our brand and market the industry. Furthermore, a strong human network is essential to the success of OCDCA as a membership association. It is important to:

- Continue to “tell the story” of the impact of CDCs in Ohio
- Design and implement a “CDC ambassador” program of positively impacted residents that resonates with influencers (political, civic, funder)
- Strengthen and continue the annual member data survey to promote the aggregated quantifiable outcomes of the membership
- Internally examine the extent to which the Ohio CDC Association name is reinforcing or confusing our brand and, if necessary, recommend an alternative
- Increase to the public and elected officials the knowledge and appreciation of CDCs by conveying a consistent message about CDC history, values, and accomplishments
- Continue to seek input from the membership to better understand member needs
- Continue to hold and improve regional membership meetings across the state to spur member understanding and involvement
- Strengthen relationships through heightened communication with members by maintaining and improving social media (SM) and information technology (IT) plans that incorporate appropriate technology tools to expand information sharing capabilities consistent with current changes, issues, trends and best practices

Goal 4: Maintain and Strengthen Financial Vitality

OCDCA has developed a strong financial position but it is important to continue that momentum and strengthen financial stability, flexibility and sustainability. We will decrease dependence on traditional funding streams by increasing unrestricted funds. Strengthening financial health will allow the organization to focus on services and capacity building activities that are most valued by the membership. We will:

- Develop and implement an operating reserve policy that will also explore investing a portion of reserves in strategic activities that support the membership and innovation
- Diversify and develop new funding partnerships such as with private philanthropy
- Increase the operating reserve to one-year of operating expenses
- Maintain and incrementally increase the membership base to 260
- Increase unrestricted funds
- Explore what potential value-added services members may be interested in, including fee-based services

Goal 5: Collaboration: Strengthen collaboration to better support members, maximize limited resources and increase advocacy success.

OCDCA has a culture of collaboration among members and the broader community development stakeholder community. Collaboration is a core strategy and an engrained part of OCDCA culture. Effective collaboration will continue to be an essential aspect of how we serve members and increase advocacy success. We will:

- Continue collaborative policy development and strategic policy alliances with aligned organizations
- Partner on grant applications when impact can be increased
- Pursue collaborative training such as social enterprise and membership agreements
- Partner with others to avoid duplication of program and service delivery
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with state agencies such as the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) and the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) to assist their missions while increasing member access to state programs and funding
- Create new collaborative relationships with appropriate state, federal and private agencies to increase resources available to the membership