



COUNCIL OF STATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES (COSCDA)
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY REPORT

WASHINGTON, DC

JUNE 2025





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This report presents the results from the Strategic Pillar Task Force meetings and progress made on COSCDA Communications during the first year of the COSCDA Strategic Action Plan implementation.

These reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

lab2.future-iq.com/coscda-strategic-action-plan-project/

REPORT PREPARED BY:

future→iq[®]
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1.1 | PROJECT PURPOSE

This summary report presents an update on progress made on the implementation of the action steps under the strategic pillars of COSCDA’s Strategic Action Plan.

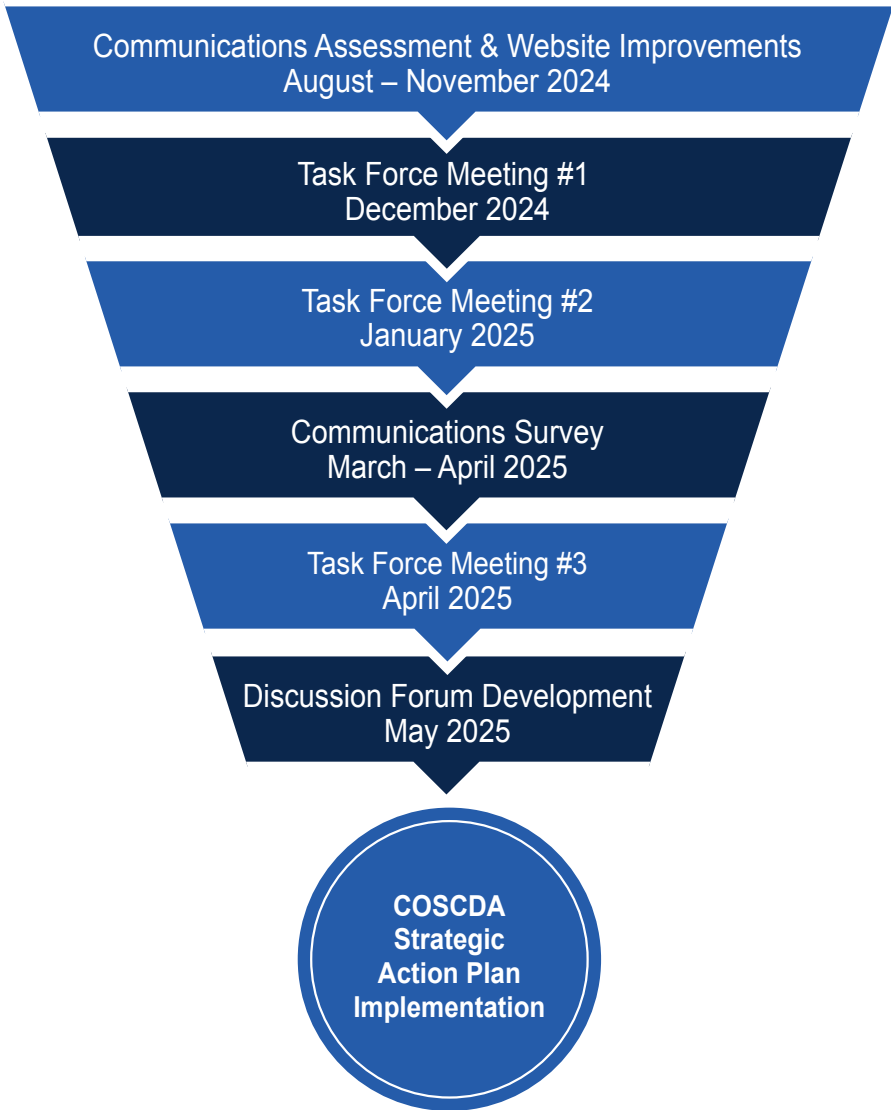
Of particular importance during the timeframe of this project were the anticipated impacts of the new U.S. administration on COSCDA and its members. A slight delay in the planning process occurred during the month of February to allow for the assessment of these impacts and to plan next steps.

This project ran from October 2024 through June 2025. A primary focus was on developing COSCDA’s communications toolbox to help the organization to amplify its voice and to provide stable guidance to its members as they navigate the ongoing changes and new rules and regulations of the U.S. government administration.

COSCD A is well on its way to implementing its 2024 Strategic Action Plan. Recent changes and improvements in communications and services have been well received by its members.

“I think COSCDA does a great with communication. I appreciate all the work you do to help the States.”
- **Communications Survey Respondent**

“I think COSDA is doing a great job keeping us informed as things are rapidly changing.”
- **Communications Survey Respondent**



Strategic Pillars

The foundation of COSCDA's Strategic Action Plan consists of five Strategic Pillars. Each Pillar has three Strategic Action Areas that were developed by COSCDA stakeholders to guide the implementation of each Strategic Pillar area.



Pillar 1: Membership Base and Potential
Strengthening COSCDA's membership base and expanding membership options

- Implement initiatives that continue to expand resources and support for members.
- Grow membership by offering innovative membership options.
- Strengthen member outreach and connections.

Pillar 5: National Positioning
Exploring COSCDA's organizational role and positioning on a national level

- Build Communications toolbox to better serve membership needs.
- Foster greater recognition of COSCDA and its role.
- Strengthen current relationships on the Federal level.

Pillar 2: Partnerships with Other Agencies and Organizations
Building on existing networks and creating new partnerships

- Amplify COSCDA's voice and thought leadership.
- Be directional and intentional about outreach efforts with other agencies and organizations.
- Create new ways to partner with other agencies and organizations.



Pillar 4: Organizational and Staff Capacity
Assessing current programming and staff capacity to meet organizational needs

- Expand training options at conferences and events.
- Increase revenue through creative initiatives.
- Invest in staff capacity to increase visibility and impact.

Pillar 3: Advocacy and Programs
Building on current successes and piloting potential new programs

- Expand educational initiatives with Congress and the public.
- Build COSCDA's ability to find innovative solutions to emerging challenges.
- Build grassroots advocacy to strengthen positioning on the Hill.



2.0 | COMMUNICATIONS ASSESSMENT

To begin this project, COSCDA and Future IQ staff met to assess what actions of the Strategic Action Plan had already been accomplished and what needed to be done to continue this progress. It was determined that preparing conditions for building the organization’s Communications Toolbox was the priority. It was also recognized that in addition to Task Force meetings, a Communications Survey of members was necessary to more fully understand what members want and need from COSCDA. Before the meetings and survey, two preparatory actions were required:

Laying the groundwork through website and newsletter development was necessary to prepare for a member needs assessment. COSCDA facilitated Task Force meetings and a Member Survey to conduct this assessment.

COSCDAs WEBSITE

Website development was initiated to update old information and compile basic resources to provide a more robust information hub for members. Website improvements included:

- It was determined that the About COSCDA pages should be organized differently. Background information, such as the mission and vision, is presented first. Following are staff and board details including biographies for the staff members and contact information for its Board of Directors. Finally, information about membership responsibilities, regions, and committees was updated and made clear.
- Information about COSCDA events, conferences, and training was moved to a single page. Upcoming events reside at the top of the page, to ensure easy access to those details. The Annual Training Conference, Program Managers Training Conference, and the COSCDA Training Academy are described at the bottom of the page.
- The Advocacy and Resource sections of the website were improved and expanded. Details of funding priorities and government relations were updated, state profiles were refreshed, and a breaking news page was created.

“I trust that COSCDA will notify members of the top and most important updates and issues relevant to members. It is so helpful for state practitioners to receive COSCDA’s informed interpretation of how updates, regulations, and requirements will affect us in the administration of our programs...”

- Communications Survey Respondent

COSCDAs NEWSLETTER

Newsletter development, both in format and regularity was established over the Fall 2024 and onto 2025 to provide a consistent messaging voice from the organization.





3.0 | COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

COSCDAs Communications Survey highlighted its value to members. Keep up to date with activities at the organization’s website at: <https://coscda.org/>.

One of the Action Areas of the National Positioning strategic pillar calls for COSCDA to build a Communications Toolbox to better serve member needs.

To gauge how best to do this, a Communications Survey was distributed to COSCDA members. Thirty-one people responded to the survey. 81% of respondents were COSCDA members, 19% were COSCDA Committee Members, 10% were COSCDA Board Members, and 10% were Other (past board or committee members and Strategic Plan Task Force member). The survey ran from March – April 2025.

“Current events! I appreciate the weekly update plan - even knowing that there is not anything to know for certain is helpful as we navigate this uncertainty.”

- Communications Survey Respondent

3.1 | HIGHLIGHTS AND INSIGHTS

Below are some of the highlights and insights from the COSCDA Communications Survey.

IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING COMMUNICATIONS FROM COSCDA

All respondents indicated that receiving communications from COSCDA was important, with the vast majority (74%) indicating it was extremely important.

AMOUNT OF COMMUNICATIONS FROM COSCDA

The majority of survey respondents were happy with the level of communications from COSCDA (55%), with 36% indicating they would like to receive more communication, and 10% indicating they would like slightly less communications.

HOW RESPONDENTS FIND OUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT COSCDA

When asked how respondents find out what is happening at COSCDA, all respondents (100%) indicated by email, 23% by COSCDA’s website, and 13% by word of mouth. No respondents indicated they found out by social media, although the answers to the social media question indicated some have followed the organization on LinkedIn and Twitter/X.

CONNECTION TO COSCDA BY SOCIAL MEDIA

The majority of survey respondents (67%) do not follow COSCDA on social media. However, for those who do, 33% use LinkedIn, and 4% use Twitter/X. COSCDA does not maintain a Facebook account.



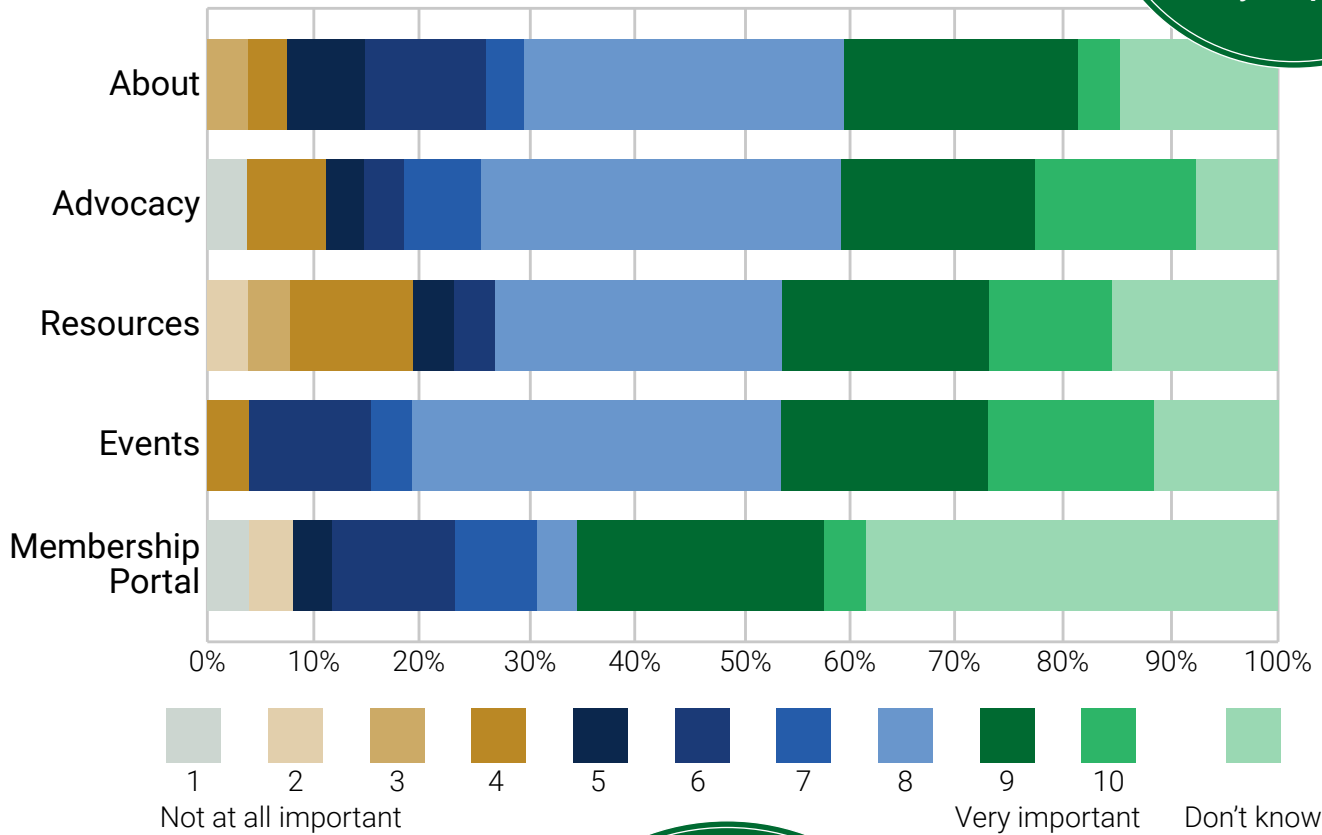


COSCDAs initiative to improve its website is a near-term implementation step of the Membership Base and Potential strategic pillar of the Strategic Action Plan.

»» 3.2 | WEBSITE ANALYSIS

COSCDAs staff work hard to maintain a website that is responsive to member needs. To better gauge what areas of the website are most helpful, respondents were asked to rate the five sections of the current website (note this was before the Discussion Forum was added as part of the implementation process.) At the time of the survey, the most helpful sections to respondents are the Advocacy and Events sections, followed by Resources, About, and the Membership Portal sections.

“I am unable to figure out how to connect with members or find resources/best practices from members. It would be a huge benefit.”
- Communications Survey Respondent



“Membership/contact information [is helpful on the website]. I’m beginning to explore the state profiles. Policy example: CDBG-CV waiver samples were very helpful at that time.”
- Communications Survey Respondent



4.0 | STRATEGIC PILLAR TASK FORCE DISCUSSIONS

The Strategic Pillar Task Forces met to review the current progress made on the Strategic Action Plan in each of the Strategic Pillar areas and began to help build out and implement the action areas in the plan. Following the meetings in December, to increase participation numbers for discussion, the planning team decided to combine the Strategic Pillar areas into two meetings for the second and third round of meetings. Task Force 1 included the pillars of Membership Base and Potential, Partnerships with other Agencies and Organizations, and Advocacy and Programs. Task Force 2 included the pillars of Organizational and Staff Capacity and National Positioning. The next two sections present the outcomes of the Task Force Meetings held in December 2024, January and April 2025.

COSCD A has dedicated this implementation project to seeking input and recommendations from its membership on how best to implement the actions of the Strategic Action Plan.

4.1 | TASK FORCE 1

Task Force 1 consisted of participants interested in contributing to three Strategic Pillar areas: Partnerships with other Agencies and Organizations, Advocacy and Programs, and National Positioning. Below are the significant updates, findings and outcomes from discussions in each pillar area.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- With the change in U.S. Administration, the biggest concern is competition for funding
- Limited COSCDA staff capacity requires strong partnerships to share leadership roles
- It is critically helpful for COSCDA to hear from members on the ground what is happening locally – what organizations and leaders are helpful to members
- COSCDA is a dynamic leader in disaster relief and its credibility should be built on by a) categorizing and leveraging partnerships, b) information sharing with other organizations, c) expanding funding resources
- Recognition that this strategic planning is significantly dependent on what happens at HUD

ADVOCACY AND PROGRAMS

- COSCDA Board approved FY2026 Advocacy priorities and is waiting to see impacts of the new Administration to form new coalitions
- The organization needs to further develop partnerships on topic areas for advocacy
- COSCDA is looking for members to share their Advocacy Training needs and explain where are the gaps/areas that the organization can help fill
- There is a need to recognize and educate about tiers of advocacy and the different ways to contribute depending on a state's ability; COSCDA can capture voices at all levels

NATIONAL POSITIONING

- The focus for COSCDA is ensuring our presence/reputation with HUD and on Capitol Hill; build coalitions and partnership to elevate COSCDA's voice
- Communications are key to COSCDA's national positioning; need more regular updates to members about what we are learning and better understand what members can use
- A communications survey for members is needed to best gauge membership needs
- COSCDA is focusing on the ability to pivot and be responsive to current events, especially in the areas of education and research
- COSCDA is working to deliberately enhance its national media presence and by using this opportunity of change in DC to help leverage the organization's voice for its programs

"Thanks for all the work you're doing and the effort to improve things. It is very much appreciated."

- Communications Survey Respondent



»» 4.2 | TASK FORCE 2

Task Force 2 consisted of participants interested in contributing to two Strategic Pillar areas: Organizational and Staff Capacity and Membership Base and Potential. Below are the significant updates, findings and outcomes from discussions in each pillar area.

MEMBERSHIP BASE AND POTENTIAL



- COSCDA is updating its website and will seek input from membership through a communications survey on what additional improvements can be made to increase utility
- The new U.S. Administration will be key determiner for member information needs
- Funding for planning is critical to members
- COSCDA needs to assure people of guidance during these confusing times; reach out to membership to find out what needs are
- Members would like to have some sort of online message board to communicate with other members
- Recommend COSCDA both taps into regional reps for input and allows other touch points with states as sometimes the information does not make it to those who need it
- Recommend that with impending budget cuts, that COSCDA increase membership levels and options for states

ORGANIZATIONAL AND STAFF CAPACITY



- COSCDA is now fully staffed and up and running (over past year); working closely with Ed on conferences and Kathleen on trainings
- COSCDA needs to increase trainings capacity
- Staff is currently focused on building COSCDA's Communications Toolbox in response to member request for information and guidance; recommend for members only





5.0 | DISCUSSION FORUM DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this information gathering and implementation process, it became clear that survey respondents and Task Force members were eager for increased and improved communications both from COSCDA and between themselves. It was recommended that as the national convening organization for state community development organizations, COSCDA should provide a Discussion Forum for membership as part of its Communications Toolbox. In May 2025, COSCDA initiated research on a Discussion Forum plug in that could serve to connect members who have questions or are seeking peer advice.

Several discussion forums were considered, and the team decided to install the Asgaros Forum plugin. This provides an interface for COSCDA members to converse with each other. These conversations are organized around COSCDA's advocacy priority areas, with both staff and members able to create topics of discussion. This will be an important aspect of COSCDA membership, providing an opportunity for members to learn from each other. It will also benefit COSCDA staff, providing insight into how it can support and engage with its members.

"Message boards with other states would be so helpful or FAQs on programs that maybe others could help answer when we're not getting answers from HUD."
- Communications Survey Respondent

The development of an online Discussion Forum to share ideas and ask questions was strongly supported by Task Force members and specifically requested by some survey respondents.

Home » Members » Forum

Discussion Forum

Forum	Subscriptions	Activity	Logout
COSCDA Discussion Forum			
COSCDA Discussion Forum			
Discussion Topics			
General Discussions 1 Topic · 1 Post	Community Development Topics 0 Topics · 0 Posts		
Housing Topics 0 Topics · 0 Posts	No topics yet!		

"Recent communications have helped mitigate the uncertainty of Federal Programs - what has changed, what hasn't changed, what funding exists, what is being heard from legislators, understanding facts and not what is being reported by the media."
- Communications Survey Respondent

COSCDAs Board Members, staff, and members engaged in this initial implementation process with great enthusiasm. Task Force discussions were open, thoughtful, and reflective of the myriad of perspectives that exist within the organization. This dedication is also reflective of the deep commitment members have to the future of the COSCDA.

Additionally, our appreciation is extended to Tess Hembree and Jenna Hampton who met on a weekly basis and provided the organizational expertise that helped to guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

COSCDAs BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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7.0 | MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the COSCDA strategic planning project, please contact:

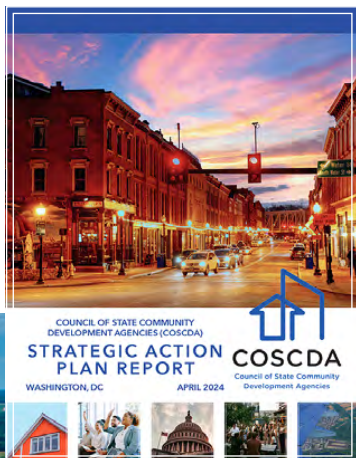


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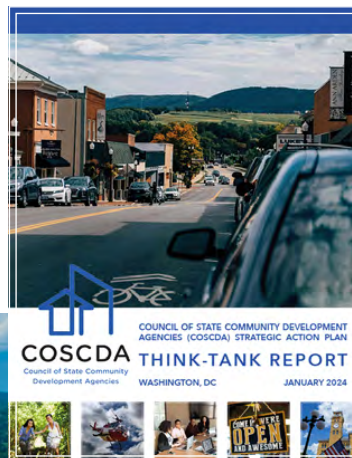
Strategic Action Plan Report



Project Portal



Think-Tank Report





8.0 | CONSULTING TEAM – ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com.



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To explore more about the COSCDA strategic planning process, please visit the project portal at:

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