

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Information on Community Economic Development activities among the CSBG Network gathered via the Community Services Block Grant Information System Survey and subsequent follow-up by NASCSP staff.



National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) &
Community Action Partnership

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AGENCY: [East Missouri Action Agency](#)

PROJECT: River Hills Restaurant and Commercial Kitchen

SUMMARY: With unemployment rising in southeast Missouri – as high as 14 percent in some counties – East Missouri Action Agency (EMAA) collaborated with other community-based organizations to launch a project that would give people job skills and employment opportunities while also generating new businesses. This project is the River Hills Restaurant and Commercial Kitchen which opened in March 2009.

The River Hills Restaurant enables low-income individuals to gain the job skills and work experience needed to enter the high-growth hospitality and food-service industry. Candidates for employment are selected in collaboration with the Missouri Career Center, the Workforce Investment Board, and the Family Support Division. Candidates receive paid on-the-job training and health insurance benefits. Also, in an effort to advance candidate employment opportunities, once employed they are encouraged to further their education through classes at a local vocational school. River Hills Restaurant serves lunch and dinner on Main Street in the small town of Park Hills, Missouri.

The **River Hills Commercial Kitchen** serves as an incubator of small businesses. It enables entrepreneurs to start a business with minimal risks related to overhead costs. Business owners have the option of renting space by the month or even by the hour. No long-term investment is required. To date, businesses such as catering services, bakeries, delis and coffee bars have gained their start in the River Hills Commercial Kitchen.

OUTCOMES: The River Hills Restaurant currently employs 15 individuals in the Park Hills area. Additionally, two classes of culinary arts trainees have completed the restaurant's training program. It should be noted that a major challenge to this project was ensuring the restaurant's profitability. To learn more, please view the *River Hills Restaurant Project Evaluation Report: Year One* and the *River Hills Restaurant Project Evaluation Report: Year Two*.

FUNDING: Community Services Block Grant and Community Economic Development funds from the federal Office of Community Services were integral to implementing this project.

PARTNERS: To make this project possible, EMAA partnered with Southeast Missouri State University's Missouri Research Corporation, which provided equipment for the commercial kitchen; the local Unitec vocational school, which provides culinary arts training to employees; and the Community Work Support program of the Missouri Family Support Division, which subsidizes wages and contributes to education, uniforms, transportation and other needs of low-income employees. Other partners include the Missouri Career Center, Workforce Investment Board and Family Support Division which help to identify candidates for the restaurant and commercial kitchen project.

CONTACT INFORMATION: East Missouri Action Agency, Park Hills, MO
Phone: (573) 431-5191
Toll Free: (800) 392-8663

AGENCY: [North East Community Action Corporation](#)

PROJECT: Housing Development Planning and Asset Management Committee

SUMMARY: Over the past several years the demand for affordable housing in the communities served by the North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) escalated substantially. NECAC increased capacity to meet the demand. The NECAC Housing Development Division once managed 100 units. Now it manages more than 800 units and owns more than 1,300 units of housing for seniors and other low-income families.

In order to effectively manage this rapid growth, the NECAC's Board of Directors and management agreed to form a new Housing Development Planning and Asset Management Committee. The committee lends broad expertise to help the division make sound decisions regarding property acquisition and management. It reviews current property performance, identifies new areas for housing development, and monitors portfolio diversity. With representation from public officials, private business, and low-income individuals, the committee has strengthened the division and provided more opportunity to not only ensure the short-term performance of assets, but plan for the long-term growth and direction of the agency in creating affordable housing opportunities.

In an effort to increase capacity, the Housing Development Planning and Asset Management Committee formed an Advisory Panel made up of industry professionals. The Advisory Panel is working with the Committee to do an overall review of the NECAC's portfolio and make recommendations concerning the properties and the future of the NECAC Affordable Housing Development Program and Department.

OUTCOMES: In fiscal year 2010, 360 units of housing were preserved and 1,366 units of affordable housing were provided. Additionally, 158 jobs were created. (*This estimate is based on the National Association of Home Builders multipliers.*) Notably, NECAC believes the key ingredients for their success are committed board members, strong partnerships, a track record of delivery and a commitment to the mission of creating affordable housing.

FUNDING: Community Services Block Grant and NeighborWorks America funds were integral to this project.

PARTNERS: Key partners for the above effort included, NeighborWorks America, Missouri Housing Development Commission, USDA Rural Development, Kansas City and St. Louis Equity Funds, Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank and Sugar Creek Realty.

CONTACT: North East Community Action Corporation, Bowling Green, MO
Phone: (573) 324-2231
Toll Free: 1-800-748-7636

AGENCY: [People Incorporated](#)

PROJECT: People Incorporated Financial Services

SUMMARY: The impetus for the development of this program was the realization that providing low-income entrepreneurs with technical assistance and financing to start or expand small businesses is a successful and innovative approach to alleviating poverty, diversifying local economies, creating jobs, and developing communities.

The organization has enhanced its small business development strategy by assisting clients, not only with their business needs, but also by supporting their overall credit and asset-building objectives. Clients are assisted in examining their personal finances, budget-setting skills, identifying personal financial goals, and finally obtaining help building their credit. In 2009, People Incorporated Financial Services started its Consumer Lending Program, primarily to provide an affordable alternative to pay day lending practices for low-income borrowers. The Lending Program has evolved into a credit- and asset-building program to get clients back on track with their personal finances so they could move on to bigger and better growth opportunities, such as small business ownership. In two years' time, the Consumer Lending Program has assisted 65 clients with boosting their credit by providing them with consumer loans, and providing the assistance and counseling they needed to become more financially stable and learn to make permanent lifestyle changes to promote their economic self-sufficiency.

People Incorporated continues to increase its efforts in business and marketing training, keeping its information pragmatic, relevant and fresh. Recently, the organization has begun strengthening the training element of the program; it has served 969 clients with technical assistance and business training in fiscal year 2010 – up from 876 in FY 2009 and 746 in FY 2008.

OUTCOMES: Since the inception of its micro-lending and small business programs in 1992, People Inc. Financial Services, a U.S. certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), has deployed 685 loans totaling over \$8.4 million to finance microenterprises in rural Virginia. These loans have resulted in the creation and/or retention of 1,752 jobs. People Incorporated has more than doubled its number of microloans deployed in one year's time (from 35 in 2009 to 87 in 2010) and has disbursed four business loans during the same time period totaling \$877,750.

FUNDING: People Incorporated Financial Services used \$66,152 of Community Services Block Grant funding plus \$90,870 in ARRA funding to operate its program for the 2009-2010 program year. Other funding utilized for technical assistance and loan funding totaling \$5,483,919, was obtained from outside sources that included the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Virginia Department of Housing and community Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as other local funding sources; loan sources were also provided by the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

PARTNERS: As partners, the above funders also provided administrative and technical support.

CONTACT INFORMATION: People Incorporated, Abingdon, VA
Phone: (276) 623-9000

AGENCY: [Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.](#)

PROJECT: First Source Center

SUMMARY: Using a Community Benefits Agreement, Pittsburgh Community Services worked with the Hill House Association and the Pittsburgh Community Employment Center to create an employment entity called First Source Center. The goal of the Center was to enable Hill District residents to secure employment opportunities connected with the creation of a new arena for the Pittsburgh Penguins. The 28-acre development plan for the new arena also included the building of a grocery store and other amenities for the area.

The First Source Center offered employment services to qualified individuals at or below 125% Federal Poverty Guideline. Moreover, the Center worked with the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania, a partnership of trade unions and contractor associations, to equip qualified individuals with the skills needed to provide the construction services needed for the arena project. As a result of these efforts, of the new hires for the arena project, 107 came through the First Source Center.

Currently, Pittsburgh Community Services is working closely with the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania to develop a skilled green building and weatherization workforce for union contractors. It's also scheduled to break ground on a green Energy and Environment Community Outreach Center in the Fall of 2011.

OUTCOMES: The First Source Center has secured employment for over 500 individuals.

FUNDING: Community Services Block Grant funds were crucial to implementing this project.

PARTNERS: Partners for the First Source Center's current efforts include, but are not limited to, the Greater Pennsylvania Regional Council of Carpenters, Laborers' District Council of Western Pennsylvania, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union #5, International Union of Operating Engineers Local Union #66, Steamfitters Local Union #449, Ironworkers Local Union #3, Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania, National Electrical Contractors Association of Western Pennsylvania Chapter, Ironworkers Employers Association of Western Pennsylvania, and Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Pennsylvania.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA
Phone: (412) 904-4700
Additional [Community Economic Development](#) Activities

AGENCY: [Rural Office of Community Services](#)

PROGRAM: Public Transportation Assistance Program

SUMMARY: The Rural Office of Community Services, Inc. (ROCS) partnered with several of South Dakota's public transportation programs in small cities to help consumers get access to the transportation they needed. The agency has recently expanded its [Public Transportation Assistance Program](#) by providing an additional bus, increasing hours of transportation availability, and adding new routes.

With Recovery Act funds, the program added three additional Sprinter busses, a 24 passenger bus, a 16 passenger bus and a handicapped accessible van. The value of the transportation voucher provided to each participant rose from \$200 to \$250 to assist with transportation for education, employment, and medical care. The expansion particularly helped unemployed participants, who could not otherwise afford to put fuel in their vehicles to go to interviews or attend school. It also had a significant impact on working parents who needed transportation for their children to get to school or day care.

OUTCOMES: Transportation vouchers have been provided to 256 households (384 individuals).

FUNDING: ROCS used \$13,384.39 of regularly appropriated Community Services Block Grant funds and \$71,500 of Recovery Act funds to support this public transportation initiative.

PARTNERS: ROCS believes the key ingredient for a successful transportation initiative is a solid relationship with other local transportation programs. ROCS worked with local and regional transit services and relied on its professional relationship with transit services to make the project work well for everyone. One particular hurdle ROCS overcame was asking the vendors to provide rides immediately after a client had been approved rather than forcing the clients to wait up to two weeks before a check was written. ROCS was able to attain 100% participation from transit services in this aspect.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Rural Office of Community Services, Inc., Lake Andes, SD
Phone: (605) 487-7634
Email: rocs@rocsinc.org

AGENCY: [Rural Alaska Community Action Program](#) (RurAL CAP)

PROGRAM: Solid Waste Management

SUMMARY: Solid waste management systems protect local water supplies from contamination and thus, safeguard overall community health. As such, it's an issue of great concern that, traditionally, Alaska's rural communities have not had consistent access to solid waste management systems. In fact, roughly 20% of Alaska's rural communities lack adequate public sanitation systems. To address this issue, RurAL CAP secured funding to work in partnership with communities to address their waste management issues. More specifically, RurAL CAP provides the following administrative and technical assistance functions to promote quality waste management in Alaskan communities:

- Organizes the award of waste management funding to community sites;
- Organizes a memorandum of agreement for each site;
- Coordinates the purchase and shipping of waste management supplies;
- Provides technical assistance and monitoring; and
- Tracks project progress and documents outcomes.

OUTCOMES: Since April 2009, more than 30 communities have received funding to improve their waste management systems. As a result, communities are reporting improved solid waste management, improved capacity to manage infrastructure projects and, most importantly, better health and a cleaner environment. What's more, below is a sampling of individual community outcome reports:

- *Petersburg* has created 144 pounds of compost and diverted 237 pounds of waste from the waste stream.
- *Napaimute* was able to clear 40,000 square feet of waste wood that will be used in the briquettes and prevent a potential fire hazard.
- *Eyak* has shipped 11 pallets (nearly 4000 lbs. of electronics and 900 cubic feet of plastics) to Anchorage for proper disposal or recycling.
- *Chilkoot* Indian Association collected 73,042 lbs. of scrap metal, 6,600 lbs. of e-waste, and distributed a recycling newsletter to 1550 homes. They also hosted 75 people for an America Recycles Day event, revised their website and updated their list serve.

FUNDING: RurAL CAP secured funding from the Denali Commission for Solid Waste Management, Senior Services America and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Community Services Block Grant funds were used, in part, to pay for a Community Development Director, Solid Waste Specialist, Solid Waste Management Coordinator, Wellness Coordinator and two Managers. These staff are critical to ensuring proper program support and oversight.

PARTNERS: RurAL CAP has a history of strong partnerships with the Denali Commission, Senior Services and the US EPA. All of these partnership contributed to the success of this project.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Anchorage, AK
Phone: (907) 279-2511

Additional [Community Economic Development](#) Activities

AGENCY: [Self Help, Inc.](#)

PROGRAM: Brockton Community Development Corporation (CDC)

SUMMARY: In late 2009, Self Help held five community listening sessions focused on the formation of a new CDC. Using the input gained during the sessions, Self Help developed a detailed plan for the Brockton CDC and began community outreach. Outreach efforts were aimed at a variety of organizations from financial institutions to faith-based organizations to economic and housing development organizations. Additionally, Self Help used radio and television media to reach community residents. As a result, 40 individuals expressed an interest in volunteering on the CDC's steering committee. In early 2010, Self Help's outreach efforts paid off when the Brockton CDC became fully operational. Through a grant from the City of Brockton Community Development Block Grant, the CDC was awarded funds to offer a first time business ownership training course. The 6 week training course assisted participants to develop a business plan and the participant who developed the best business plan was assisted with one year's space rental to set up their new business in downtown Brockton.

OUTCOMES: Due to the phase out of Community Services Block Grant Recovery Act funds, Brockton CDC was only able to conduct one course which resulted in the development of a small business and renewed economic interest in downtown Brockton.

FUNDING: Regular Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Recovery Act CSBG funds were used to plan for and manage the CDC.

PARTNERS: Local partners included Old Colony Y, Brockton Interfaith Community, BAMSI, Brockton Housing Authority, Neighborhood Housing Services, Brockton Multi-Cultural Center and Rockland Bank. All of the aforementioned partners provided staff to help plan and design the new Brockton CDC. Another integral partner was Building a Better Brockton which provided space to hold meetings as well as staff support.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Self Help, Inc., Brockton, MA
Website: <http://selfhelpinc.org/>

AGENCY: [Dubois-Pike-Warrick Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc.](#) (TRI-CAP)

PROGRAM: Property Value Stabilization

SUMMARY: After securing a grant to stabilize property values in downtown Huntingburg, TRI-CAP partnered with local business, government and community leaders to begin implementing their plan. The plan would provide quality affordable housing to low-income seniors and families through the conversion and refurbishing of an abandoned nursing home and several foreclosed homes. In January 2011, the conversion and refurbishing of the blighted nursing home, now Stork Place Apartments, was completed. Fifteen of the seventeen apartments in Stork Place are occupied by low to moderate income seniors. TRI-CAP is now working to revitalize five single-family dwellings that were distressed properties. These homes are all in various stages of rehabilitation. When complete, they will be qualified as energy efficient and healthy homes for low-income families.

OUTCOMES: The most immediate impact is that upgraded senior and low-income housing is now readily available for our clients. The housing stock and options for our clients has been dramatically improved. Ultimately, 22 families will have a better place to live. Plus, blighted, vacant and/or foreclosed facilities have been renovated and converted to needed living space. The housing stock and related property values are on the rise in Huntingburg. Happily, foreclosures also seem to be declining.

FUNDING: This project was made possible through \$4,544,275 in funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

PARTNERS: Several key partners included the TRI-CAP board, Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority, Huntingburg Common Council, local stakeholders, Milestone Ventures, Kirkwood Design Studios and Huntingburg Mayor Marvin Belcher.

CONTACT INFORMATION: TRI-CAP, Jasper, IN
Phone: (812) 482-2233

AGENCY: United Planning Organization (UPO)

PROGRAM: Multi-Purpose Community Center

SUMMARY: As outlined in the study, “Assessing Health and Health Care in the District of Columbia,” key health service needs for the District’s residents are an expansion of primary and urgent care, investment in health information technology connectivity, improved emergency medical care, non-capital investments and policies. In response to this study, Charles Young Community Ventures, a nonprofit collaboration between UPO and the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative (E/BFSC), in partnership with the District of Columbia, created a plan to redevelop the former Charles Young Elementary School into a comprehensive multi-purpose community center. Once finalized, the reused school development site will house programs, services, and training that will create measurable improvements in the lives of the children and families in the surrounding neighborhoods. The site will include a family service center, library, recreation center, and an ambulatory health care and dental clinic.

OUTCOMES: The goal of this effort, expected to be completed by the Spring of 2012, is to redevelop and reuse this vacant school to house programs, services, and training that will create measurable improvements in the lives of the children and families in the surrounding neighborhoods.

FUNDING: To fund this effort, UPO received \$135 million in Tobacco Settlement Funds, a New Communities Pre-Development grant, DC Public Library funds and New Market Tax Credits. Community Services Block Grant funds also provide integral support to this project.

PARTNERS: Partners include not only health services provided by Capitol Health Management Service, but also strategic partnerships with D.C. Public Libraries, Sasha Bruce and Associates for Renewal in Education.

CONTACT INFORMATION: United Planning Organization, Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 238-4600
Email: info@upo.org

AGENCY: Washington Hancock Community Action Agency (WHCA)

PROGRAM: [Maine Farmers' Market Convention](#)

SUMMARY: Down East Business Alliance, a WHCA initiative, organized the first Maine Farmers' Market Convention in 2009. The Convention included panel discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities for farmers, market vendors and farmers' market managers. Speakers included representatives from US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Maine Department of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension, as well as graphic designers, marketing, nutrition and financial experts. What was unique about the convention is that it did not focus on farming or agricultural practices. It focused on business development and marketing strategies to help farmers increase income and become more self-sufficient.

OUTCOMES: In a follow up survey, participants reported that they learned business techniques they would take back to their markets. This led to at least one participant hiring a market manager. Overall, participants went away from the convention ready to revitalize their markets for the upcoming season. Moreover, as a result of WHCA's leadership in organizing Farmers' Market Conventions the agency was awarded a \$10,000 grant to administer to multiple farmers' markets. The purpose of the grant was to encouraging SNAP recipients to shop there and access high quality, nutritious, fresh local fruits and vegetables at half price. WHCA was also able to receive funds from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant to develop a marketing toolkit called Operation MarketQuest, where by farmers' markets have the tools and funds they need to improve their marketing efforts to Maine's low-income SNAP population.

FUNDING: All of the below partners contributed funds and helped spread the word about the Convention. Notably, ongoing support from Community Services Block Grant funds allowed WHCA to leverage these additional resources and to cover a number of expenses association with the convention.

PARTNERS: The convention was sponsored by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Maine Department of Agriculture, Bangor Hydro Electric Company, Farmers' Market Coalition, Heart of Maine RC&D, and the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Washington Hancock Community Action Agency, Milbridge and Ellsworth, WA
Phone: (207) 546-7544
Email: administration@whcacap.org
Additional [Community Economic Develop](#) Activities

AGENCY: [Community Concepts, Inc.](#)

PROGRAM: [Western Maine Community Economic Development Corporation](#) (WMEDC)

SUMMARY: Seeing a rapid decline in manufacturing and new business development in Oxford County, Community Concepts was asked to create, support, and manage the WMEDC. WMEDC uses a regional approach to serve approximately 2,200 businesses by providing business retention, workforce development, business attraction, legislative advocacy and economic education. Until WMEDC's inception, there had never been a county-wide economic development presence in Oxford County. Now businesses are provided with the following and more:

- **United voice for Oxford County.** Oxford County is a primarily rural county that lags in economic prosperity versus the State and Federal averages. Without a united voice it is difficult to attract the resources that are needed.
- **County-wide economic development educational forums.** In the past, there were few forums to educate the public about economic development issues and little way for local citizens to hear varying perspectives. We are about to hold our fourth forum, a debate on wind power in Oxford County.
- **Marketing of Oxford County and hub areas to attract and retain existing businesses.** There was not one economic development organization devoted to Oxford County thus, there was little marketing of the County to attract new businesses and support those already in business.
- **Provider of loan pools to small and medium sized businesses.** WMEDC works with businesses that may need gap financing or have been turned down by a bank to provide funding in difficult times.

OUTCOMES: As a result of the work done by WMEDC, over 38 jobs have been created or saved.

FUNDING: Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Recovery Act funds were used to support the creation of the WMEDC. Regular CSBG funds were leveraged with private donations to support the WMEDC's continued efforts.

PARTNERS: Along with the businesses that WMEDC serves, partners include Western Maine Health Care, Northeast Bank, Penley Corporation, Androscoggin Savings Bank, and several individual donors.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Community Concepts, Inc., South Paris, ME
Phone: (207) 743-7716
Email: info@community-concepts.org



National Association for State Community Services Programs

444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 846

Washington, DC 20001

Tel (202) 624-5866

www.nascsp.org

Community Action Partnership

1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 1210

Washington, DC 20036

Tel (202) 265-5048

www.communityactionpartnership.com