

NALCAB Rural Capacity Building Success Stories

Success Story 1: Greenlee County

Location: Greenlee County, AZ (HUD Region 9)

RCB Funding: 2018

NALCAB RCB staff visited Greenlee County, Arizona in Oct. 2021, home to the Morenci Open Freeport Pit Copper Mine-- the world's largest open-pit copper mine and the region's primary economic driver. With over 3,700 people employed at the mine, the community severely lacks available affordable housing. NALCAB collaborated with stakeholders and the county to explore potential solutions and invited developers to the area as part of the Greenlee County Housing Feasibility Study Recommendation completed by an outside agency. The NALCAB team provided the Greenlee County Economic Development Department (EDD) with an implementation plan based Feasibility. NALCAB rural development experts and EDD explored options and requirements for developing mixed-income workforce housing and affordable housing for low-income individuals, and approaches for leveraging participation from both nonprofit and for-profit housing developers. NALCAB staff was instrumental in aiding the EDD in its acquisition of \$250,000 of ARPA funding received by Greenlee County and allocated it to purchase Tyler Farms, a 340-acre property, which will be developed into accessible workforce housing.

In addition, Erica Gonzalez, rural development coordinator for Greenlee County EDD, participated in NALCAB's 12-month Pete Garcia Fellowship program – a professional development program for next-generation community economic development leaders. For her Fellowship project, she presented a comprehensive overview and analysis of the Tyler Farms affordable housing development.



Success Story 2: Comfort Vision 2050 Project

Location: Comfort, TX (HUD Region 6)

RCB Funding: 2015

The town of Comfort, TX, an incorporated community located northwest of San Antonio, was experiencing rapidly rising housing costs and the development pressures that come from being situated near some of the fastest growing urban areas in the country. Housing was historically led by a small group of residents with limited representation of the entire community at large. The Comfort Area Foundation (CAF) recognized this was a challenge and wanted to engage in a more diverse planning process to develop strategies for growth in an equitable manner. NALCAB assisted the community in undertaking the creation of “Comfort Vision 2050,” a bottom-up, grassroots approach to rural development planning that acknowledged the residents’ recent decision to remain incorporated. NALCAB helped Comfort facilitate community lesson sessions and visioning workshops to move forward with practical and workable development strategies. NALCAB partnered with University of Texas at San Antonio’s Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research to gather and analyze data related to housing, infrastructure and development trends in the area. The resulting plan recommended 75 Strategic Initiatives that community volunteers, organized into working groups, will undertake. In acknowledgement of the inclusive and comprehensive planning effort, the Comfort Vision 2025 was honored by the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association with a 2020 Grassroots Initiative Achievement Award.

Link to UTSA article: <https://www.utsa.edu/today/2020/10/story/comfort-vision-2050-wins-planning-award.html>

Link to Comfort Vision 2050: https://texas.planning.org/documents/4144/COMFORT_VISION_2050.pdf





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Success Story 3: El Pájaro CDC (IN PROGRESS)

Location: Watsonville, CA (HUD Region 9)

RCB Funding: 2016 and 2018

El Pájaro is a great example of the impact multiple RCB engagements can have on the capacity building of a rural serving organization. El Pájaro CDC was founded 40 years ago and has successfully helped Latino and immigrant entrepreneurs start, maintain, and expand their businesses by offering technical assistance, helping acquire loans, and developing small business plans. In 2020, El Pájaro was awarded a \$200,000 loan from NALCAB's Rural Revolving Loan Fund to seed their loan fund that provides capital to small businesses in their incubator and business development programs. During this time, EL Pájaro also received technical assistance with building a curriculum, lending training for staff and board members, and recommendations for the new lending program. In 2020, the NALCAB team provided El Pájaro with multiple technical assistance engagements including a fully-written Community Economic Development (CED) grant application that was successfully awarded \$800,000 to open their commercial kitchen, creating 40 new jobs. NALCAB also helped El Pájaro craft a successful CDFI Technical Assistance Application that enhanced their lending services, as well as a Women's Businesses Center application which allows for women in their area to grow and enhance their own business. The RCB investments and the leveraged private funds enabled El Pájaro to further serve its community.

