

Affordable Housing is Key to Sustainable Economic and Community Development

by Tony Hernandez

Successful community development depends on workforce and affordable housing being accessible. Without these types of housing, a community runs the risk of becoming just another place to visit rather than a neighborhood and part of a thriving region.

When jobs are created, businesses started and downtowns revitalized, access to affordable housing must also increase in order to keep people in the region and attract others to it.

At USDA, we recognize that community economic development (CED) is more than just a single project helping a single entity. It is a carefully planned, sustainable and continuous initiative that is designed to draw and keep people in an area. So, community economic development efforts, then, rest on the twin pillars of population growth and retention. Areas with a growing population need both housing and essential community facilities and amenities.

Whether an economy is driven by growth in a specific industry, downtown revitalization, small business financing or a combination of all, there must be enough housing to accommodate the new residents. USDA Rural Development's housing and community facilities programs can be catalyst for CED in the nation's rural communities.

The Rural Housing Service finances community and economic development activities such as single-family homeownership and construction, multi-family rental properties, assisted-living facilities, rental assistance, and home repairs to address health and safety hazards. These three major program areas – Single-Family Housing, Multi-Family Housing and Community Facilities – have dedicated staff in every state and U.S. territory working to increase CED activities across rural America and improve the lives of Americans.

We partner with local lenders, community development groups, housing finance agencies, realtors' associations and other regional leaders to plan and finance ways to make rural single- and multi-family homes safe, energy-efficient, accessible and affordable.

An economically vibrant rural America contributes to a stronger U.S. economy. If you are working to develop your rural community and want to know more about how USDA's Rural Housing Service can assist you, contact [your local Rural Development office](#) today to learn more.

Tony Hernandez is Administrator for USDA's Rural Housing Service.

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