Section 4 Helps the Most Vulnerable Buy and Preserve Homes

Housing infrastructure is a critical issue for New Mexico, where many rural families live in sub-standard or aging homes and grapple with multi-generational poverty, even while they are working hard to make ends meet.

Southwestern Regional Housing and Community Development Corporation (SRHCDC) has a 14-year history of providing and preserving affordable housing for low-income, rural families, veterans, farmworkers, seniors, and people with disabilities in the Southwestern part of New Mexico. SRHCDC also provides financial counseling, debt management and credit counseling to low- and moderate-income residents in Luna, Hidalgo, Catron, Grant, and Sierra Counties. SRHCDC services a vast area of 21,544 square miles.

A 2015 Section 4 grant was used to hire and train two new SRHCDC staff to conduct outreach, provide educational services to residents, and weatherize 166 rural homes. Thanks to this significant investment in staff capacity and training, SRHCDC was awarded a USDA Mutual Self-Help grant – a significant accomplishment that will support the construction of 13 new rural homes and help qualifying low-income families apply for loan assistance.
Section 4 Funds Lower Energy Costs and Builds Housing Security

With Section 4 funding, two new SRHCDC staff expanded the organization’s service area and provided one-to-one instruction to first-time homeowners on maintenance and energy cost savings. The new staff attended training in homeowner education, energy efficiency and financial counseling, and both became certified 502 Loan Packagers under the USDA Rural Housing Service.

Thanks to this expanded capacity, SRHCDC weatherized more than 166 homes and rehabilitated six homes, helping low-income rural residents save at least 30 percent in their utility bills. Staff also provided comprehensive credit counseling and first time homebuyer pre-purchase education, which led to nine families purchasing new homes. The Section 4 funding positioned SRHCDC to expand its program even further, thanks to winning a USDA Mutual Self-Help grant.

Impact of Section 4 Support

Funding from this grant was used to hire two new staff to complete sustainable home ownership outreach to rural residents. During the grant period, SRHCDC weatherized 166 homes; provided homebuyer counseling that resulted in nine families purchasing homes; rehabilitated six homes; and constructed five new affordable single family homes.

Housing Security

Access to sustainable homeownership expands when support services are provided – from financial literacy, housing counseling, weatherization, and financing.

Weatherizing 166 homes is expected to save recipient at least 30 percent on their utility bills, helping make their homes more affordable and sustainable for at least 25 more years.

Economic Impact

Rehabilitating and constructing affordable rural homes creates economic stability for residents, while also generating jobs and other economic benefits for the community.

Rehabilitation of 6 homes and construction of 5 new homes create an estimated $989,000 in wages and contribute an estimated $572,000 million in taxes and local government revenue during construction.

SRHCDC is based in southwestern New Mexico District 2, where:

- 23% of people live in poverty
- 43% of renters pay more than 30% of their income on rent
- 10% of civilians are unemployed

From the American Community Survey 2015 data

Growing and Expanding with Section 4

This funding for staff capacity builds off past investments Enterprise has made in SRHCDC’s ability to serve low- and moderate-income rural New Mexicans. A 2013 Section 4 grant of $35,000 previously helped support the organization as they expanded their homeownership counseling program, enhanced their staff training and certification credentials, and built 16 affordable family homes that met Energy Star and Build Green New Mexico sustainability criteria. These investments in organizational capacity pay dividends that go far beyond the term of the grant, as organizations expand and enhance their services and provide long-term safe and affordable options for rural homeowners.

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