



Rural
Community
Assistance
Partnership

THE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION (REDI)
FINAL REPORT

RCAP National Wealth Works Technical Assistance Program



FINAL REPORT PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

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**Rural Community
Assistance Partnership**



About

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) founded in 1973, is a national network of nonprofit partners, including six regional partners, with its national office in Washington, D.C. Since its creation, RCAP's primary focus has been to provide technical assistance and training to build capacity in rural and tribal communities around economic development, access to safe drinking water and sanitary wastewater serving rural communities across the United States, tribal lands, and U.S. territories. RCAP's mission is to build resiliency and improve quality of life in rural communities.

Background

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

In 2018 the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) was one of four cooperators selected by the USDA Rural Development Innovation Center to launch the Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) Program in 47 rural communities across the United States. The REDI program was designed to support regionalized planning in rural communities to overcome multi-jurisdictional challenges and to help better leverage federal, state, local and private funding. The USDA's Innovation Center created the REDI initiative to support recommendations identified by the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to develop the rural economy and support rural quality of life.

To help the USDA achieve these goals under the new REDI program, RCAP joined forces with the Aspen Institute, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and a network of national partner organizations and regional WealthWorks hubs to scale and promote a proven model of rural economic development planning and implementation - the Community Capitals Framework, also known as WealthWorks.

WealthWorks is a community-centered, systems approach to economic development with a strong track record of transforming some of the most distressed and marginalized rural communities in the U.S. The model is distinct in that it allows communities to focus on what they have—instead of what they lack—to generate new and sustainable economic opportunities that are rooted in local people, places and businesses.




Rural
Community
Assistance
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Community
Strategies Group





WEALTHWORKS HUBS HELPED COMMUNITIES UNLOCK \$4.9 MILLION IN NEW FUNDING

From 2019-2021, RCAP and its cohort of partners worked with 30 communities in 21 states to assist select REDI communities with developing and implementing actionable community and economic development plans, unlocking \$4.9 million in federal, state and private funding. The project also helped establish an expanded network of WealthWorks technical assistance providers through RCAP's existing partner network of 300+ field staff serving rural communities in every state and Puerto Rico.

This document serves as the final report for the RCAP cooperator team. While our team provided timely updates to the USDA Rural Development Innovation Center on a quarterly basis, this final report seeks to highlight some of the key activities and outcomes achieved through this initiative, as well as some of the lessons learned and opportunities to improve delivery in the future. We thank the USDA Rural Development Innovation Center for the opportunity to be a partner in launching the REDI program and expanding rural communities' access to tools like WealthWorks. We especially thank our implementing partners and communities for their dedication and commitment to staying the course throughout the pandemic. We are proud of what our network of partners and communities were able to accomplish over the course of this program and hope that the outcomes achieved and lessons learned will lead to continued resourcing to advance economic development innovation in rural America.

The RCAP National WealthWorks Technical Assistance Program

In 2018, RCAP joined forces with the Aspen Institute, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and a network of national partner organizations and regional WealthWorks hubs to launch the National WealthWorks Technical Assistance Program.

Initiated as part of the USDA's Rural Economic Development Innovation (REDI) program, the project was designed to assist rural communities and regions facing persistent poverty and threatened livelihoods with developing and implementing actionable community and economic development plans using the Community Capitals Wealth Creation Framework, also known as WealthWorks. WealthWorks is a proven approach to community and economic development that connects a communities' existing assets with new market opportunities to build wealth and create livelihoods that are rooted locally.

In addition to providing direct technical assistance (TA) to select communities, the cohort of partners worked to scale and strengthen the WealthWorks model through a national train-the-trainer program for RCAP's network of 300+ technical assistance providers (TAPs), a peer learning summit, a series of workshops for REDI communities and WealthWorks practitioners, and an expanded version of the www.WealthWorks.org website to ensure that communities would have ongoing access to WealthWorks resources and training tools to implement the model beyond the three-year REDI program.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES MET

By utilizing the WealthWorks framework as a planning tool, RCAP provided TA to selected communities achieving the following program objectives:

- **Built the capacity of 30 rural leadership teams.** We developed plans for economic development that built on existing assets in the community and focused on locally driven solutions that connected to the regional economy.
- **Supported those 30 leadership teams** in taking actionable steps to address key strategies identified in their plans with goals to improve quality of life, achieve e-connectivity, and harness existing technological innovation.
- **Organized value chains with 17 communities** that became a new economic driver to create new jobs for the rural workforce while also addressing key gaps identified during the planning process.
- **Expanded capacity to access resources** by connecting the value chain partners to Opportunity Zone investors, USDA Rural Development (RD) grant programs, other federal funding agencies, available state economic development resources, and local and national philanthropic organizations committed to rural America. In total, **WealthWorks Hubs were able to help communities unlock \$4.9 million in funding to activate their plans.**
- **Established a network of 300+ WealthWorks technical assistance providers** that have a presence in every state and Puerto Rico.

WealthWorks Hubs and Partners

| ORGANIZATION | DESCRIPTION | REDI COMMUNITIES |
|---|--|---|
| CENTRAL APPALACHIAN NETWORK (CAN) HUB | CAN is a network of nonprofit organizations working for a more just and sustainable economy for over 150 counties in the Central Appalachian states. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mingo County, WV• Rockbridge County, VA• Page County, VA• West Huntington, WV• Kimball, WV |
| COMMUNITIES UNLIMITED (CU) HUB | CU serves seven states in the southern U.S., an area with many rural communities, a high minority population, high poverty and food insecurity. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vicksburg, MS• Marfa, TX• Quapaw, OK• Alva, OK• Dumas, AR |
| COMMUNITY ROOTS (CR) HUB | Community Roots, LLC is a small consulting firm specializing in community, organizational and business development consulting. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genesee Valley, NY• Tioga County, NY• Erie County, NY• Bristol, NH• Coos County, NH• Fair Haven, VT |
| RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (RDI) HUB | RDI is a regional rural development hub organization working hand-in-hand with communities to strengthen rural people, places, and economies in the Pacific Northwest. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• North Olympic Peninsula, WA• Western Alliance, ID• Harney County, OR• Cottage Grove, OR |

WealthWorks Hubs and Partners

| ORGANIZATION | DESCRIPTION | REDI COMMUNITIES |
|--|--|--|
| RURAL COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE CORPORATION (RCAC) HUB | RCAC's work includes environmental infrastructure, affordable housing development; economic and leadership development; and community development finance in western tribes and states. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shiprock Aztec, NM • Native American Dev Corp, MT • Washoe Tribe, NV & CA • Southwest, CO • Crow Agency, MT • Southern Apache County, AZ |
| MIDWEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP) HUB | MAP provides solutions to rural communities and tribal nations in the rural midwest. Through individualized support, residents find the solutions that will help revitalize their communities. | COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vernon County, MO • Cheyenne River Sioux, SD |
| ASPEN INSTITUTE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES GROUP PARTNER | The Aspen Institute is a nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Aspen drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States. | SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created and maintained WealthWorks online tools and resources for communities. |
| NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NADO) PARTNER | NADO provides advocacy, education, research, and training for regional development organizations. NADO promotes regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions. | SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported outreach and coordinated peer learning summits and networking throughout the project period. |

The WealthWorks Approach

**A SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIVE APPROACH
TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT.**



RCAP used the WealthWorks approach for its community and economic development planning. Many rural and small communities are seeking opportunities to do economic development differently and to shift their efforts from the typical deficit-based economic development strategies to consider a more asset-based, comprehensive and homegrown strategy.

The WealthWorks model offers communities an alternative, seeking instead to build wealth through underutilization of assets already in the region and that have market demand that can contribute to regional economies, reduce poverty in their regions, and eliminate the isolation of economically marginalized people and places by connecting them to larger multi-state and national regions.

This framework supports and builds upon existing economic development programs like the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs), while allowing a more refined and local approach to economic development planning that ensures that the capacity and resources generated by the plan stay in the community.

One concept that is particularly important to the WealthWorks model is the value chain. Value chains offer a practical way to build stocks of local capital, increase local ownership and control of that capital, and improve livelihoods and upward mobility for people, places, and businesses within a region. They show how a network of different types of partner investments, coordinated around a true market opportunity, can produce wealth that remains in the region.

Communities and Technical Assistance

WEALTHWORKS HUBS PROVIDED REDI COMMUNITIES WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACROSS (4) PRIMARY PHASES.

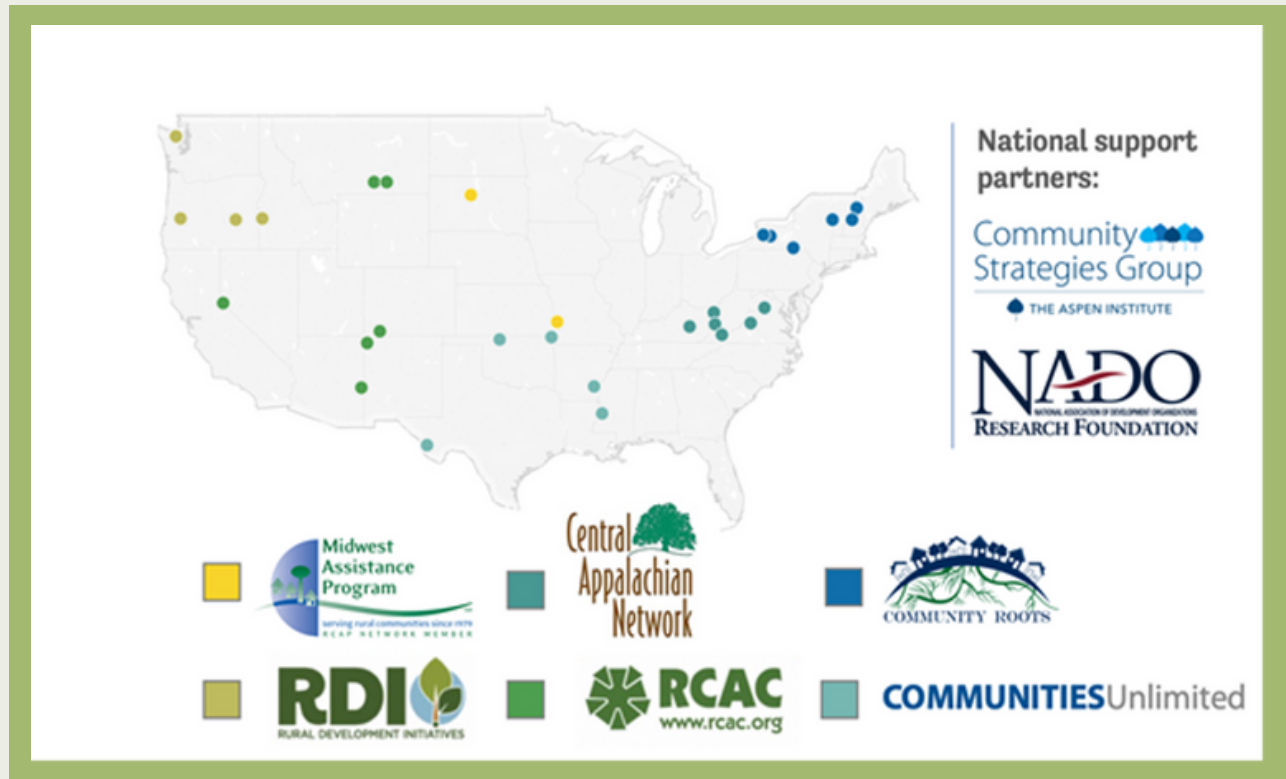
- 1 **Building leadership capacity** and assembling a leadership team
- 2 Conducting the **WealthWorks community assessment**
- 3 Engaging in **economic development planning**, including mapping the **value chain**
- 4 Supporting **implementation of strategic priorities**, including connecting to funding resources.

A community's progression through each phase was determined by a variety of factors including: a community's specific needs and goals, available resources and their level of readiness to take their work to the next level. Not every community sought to create a value chain or a community economic development plan, and not every community was ready to move on to implementation after going through the WealthWorks planning process. The other major factor communities and WealthWorks Hubs had to deal with was the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases the pandemic disrupted work completely, and in others, the WealthWorks process helped communities pivot.

A total of **30 communities** received WealthWorks Technical Assistance during the REDI project.

- **50% of communities participated in all four stages of TA support** from leadership development through implementation.
- **77% completed a community economic development plan.**
- **30% successfully secured** federal, state, local and private **funding** as a result of the TA they received. Total funding unlocked equalled **\$4.9 million.**
- **73% of communities are continuing to activate strategies and projects** identified through the WealthWorks process.
- **5,870 hours of TA provided.** This is a **460% increase** over the 1,050 TA hours originally contracted.

Communities and Technical Assistance



COMMUNITY & TEAMS

ALVA, OK

CU & CITY OF ALVA

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED

Focus Area: Workforce development and infrastructure

- Leadership team trained
- WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted
- CED Strategy completed
- Value Chain developed
- Implementation TA provided

KEY OUTCOMES

REDI helped establish a leadership team equipped with CED Strategy and Value Chain. Planning helped identify an opportunity to develop a grocery store food waste facility to convert discarded food into organic pellet fertilizer. Alva leadership is currently working with a North Carolina company to possibly build a plant of this type in the area.

Communities and Technical Assistance

COMMUNITY & TEAMS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED

KEY OUTCOMES

BRISTOL, NH

CR & CITY OF BRISTOL

Focus Area: Volunteer capacity building and Economic Development

- Leadership team trained
- WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted
- CED Strategy completed
- Value Chain developed
- Implementation TA provided

REDI helped the Town of Bristol work through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat (SWOT) analysis, introduce WealthWorks and understand assets, and move forward with small business support, creative economy and more. COVID created a shift in focus to small business development and support.

CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX, SD

MAP & THE CHEYENNE
RIVER TRIBE

Area Focus: Tourism

- Inability to provide technical assistance to this tribal entity due to reservation closures and redirection of human resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to move forward with the required assistance for this tribe, financial resources were needed to fully assist the tribe by allowing a more fluid version of REDI based on tribal human resource availability and tribal restrictions to address emerging health threats.

COOS COUNTY, NH

CR & THE CONSERVATION FUND

Focus Area: Recreation and Tourism Promotion

- Leadership team trained
- WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted
- CED Strategy completed
- Value Chain developed

REDI helped bring Coos County economic development and recreation people together with those from far northeastern Vermont and Coaticook, Quebec to discuss ways of working together to promote the larger region.

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|--|---|---|
| COTTAGE GROVE, OR RDI & BOHEMIA FOOD HUB Focus Area: Youth Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Implementation TA provided | <p>REDI support has enabled this region to strengthen the entrepreneurial pathway for underserved and marginalized groups, and particularly immigrants and youth.</p> <p>An entrepreneur-serving non-profit was created for ongoing support of underserved Latinx entrepreneurs; 4 Latinx businesses launched; and 2 videos were produced in the Guatemalan language of Mam (How to Use an ATM and How to Open a Bank Account); a Local Food Local Places technical assistance grant was accessed for the region; \$350K+ in funding from the State of Oregon and other foundations was secured.</p> | |
| CROW AGENCY, MT RCAC, CROW INDIAN RESERVATION & PLENTY DOORS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION | Focus Area: Workforce Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | <p>Plenty Doors CDC, a local nonprofit, (REDI applicant) applied for and was awarded \$30,000 in RD funding for a consultant to complete a retail leakage study and to complete a feasibility study for a business incubator. The Grocery Store / Business Incubator moved from plan to reality with Plenty Doors becoming a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). RCAC is continuing to support Plenty Doors through 2024 with capacity building, access to funding and entrepreneurship training.</p> |
| GENESEE VALLEY, NY CR & LETCHWORTH GATEWAY VILLAGES (LGV) Focus Area: Outdoor Recreation and Sustainable Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | <p>REDI helped the LGV build a network of 70 partners working together across a five-county region to develop the Genesee Valley's potential as an outdoor recreation and heritage tourism destination. Together the network secured nearly \$1.2 million in federal resources to advance their WW regional strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 10 community trail town initiative, • A digital trail mapping tool to promote outdoor recreation in the region, • A rural innovation institute to support local workforce development, and a rural revitalization grant fund to support historic preservation. | |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|---|--|
| DUMAS, AR CU & WEST DUMAS COMMUNITY FAMILY LIFE CENTER | Focus Area: Workforce Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted | REDI helped West Dumas Community Family Life Center complete a WealthWorks Community Assessment. Potential entrepreneurship opportunities identified included the development of recreational, service and retail businesses. |
| ERIE COUNTY, NY CR & RURAL OUTREACH CENTER (ROC) | Focus Area: Workforce Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted• CED Strategy completed• Value Chain developed | REDI helped ROC bring together stakeholders, work through a SWOT, introduce WealthWorks and understand assets, and move forward with a workforce development plan. |
| FAIR HAVEN, VT CR & FAIR HAVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (EDC) | Focus Area: Downtown Development and Outdoor Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted• CED Strategy completed | REDI helped Fair Haven understand its assets and consider ways of building on those assets, focusing on a recreation-based economic development strategy. |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|
| HARNEY COUNTY, OR RDI & HIGH DESERT BIOMASS COOPERATIVE Focus area: Biomass <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | REDI support enabled engagement of over 15 partners in the region, including a tribe, energy coops, state and federal agencies, county agencies, non-profits, the private sector, and others. Outcomes included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stewardship agreement with the Forest Service to provide a long-term solution to the supply chain while enhancing job creation, forest conservation and forest fire reduction; • A strategy for growth and funding of the biomass sector in the region. • The region is in the process of applying for approximately \$750k of grants for expansion of the heating district. | |
| KIMBALL, WV DEVELOPMENT GREATER EAST (EDGE) | Focus Area: Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted | Workshops hosted virtually with local farmers, officials and community leaders to assess food and agricultural opportunities for McDowell County. The COVID-19 crisis and lack of broadband in the area greatly affected CAN's ability to carry out technical assistance as originally planned. |
| MAGOFFIN, KY CAN & COMMUNITY FARM ALLIANCE (CFA) | Focus Area: Food Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted | CFA staff completed a Community Food Security Assessment (CFSA) of Magoffin County based on surveys distributed to producers, consumers, and food buyers. The WealthWorks process provided a well-rounded idea of how the food system looks and works in Magoffin County. |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|--|---|
| <p>MARFA, TX</p> <p>CU, COUNTY OF PRESIDIO, CITY OF PRESIDIO, & CITY OF MARFA</p> <p>Focus Area: Water and transportation infrastructure, expand technological innovation and support business development. Workforce development and apprenticeship programs to support health care providers, mental health services, childcare services and affordable housing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | <p>Secured \$140,635 in funding, including a FY22 USDA RD Solid Waste Technical Assistance award to support value chain priorities in solid waste management, recycling and composting.</p> <p>TA delivered also helped two local start-up businesses secure loans to launch a local bookstore, Stop & Read Books in Marfa; and Marfa Meats, the first local small-scale meat processing facility for many decades in this area of historic ranching and cattle production.</p> |
| <p>MINGO COUNTY, WV</p> <p>CAN & MINGO COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY</p> | <p>Focus Area: Workforce Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | <p>Mingo County. Supported the Redevelopment Authority in scouting additional funding for the project.</p> |
| <p>NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE, MT</p> <p>RCAC & THE NATIVE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NADC)</p> | <p>Focus Area: Poverty, substance abuse, low high school graduation rates, and high unemployment rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed | <p>As a result of RCAC's Recharge Our Community's Economy (ROCE) training, "Rosebud Tipis", a Northern Cheyenne entrepreneur, was awarded \$10,000 from the MT Indian Equity Fund. The funds were used to install water and electrical infrastructure and to purchase equipment (Tipis) for the camp.</p> <p>RCAC continues to work with NADC members in Northern Cheyenne on entrepreneurship and small business development with funding.</p> |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|
| NORTH OLYMPIC PENINSULA (NOP), WA RDI & NORTH OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NODC) | <p>Focus Area: Entrepreneurship and e-Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted• CED Strategy completed• Value Chain developed• Implementation TA provided | <p>REDI supported the NOP to assess the forestry sector and how local small businesses and entrepreneurs can be better supported to create and grow economic opportunities that align with environmental conservation. Stakeholders from 32 different businesses and organizations were engaged, the value chain was mapped, and a strategy produced to outline the path forward. Early implementation activities included developing an alder wood opportunities value chain. Funding is anticipated for this project.</p> |
| PAGE COUNTY, VA CAN & PAGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM | <p>Focus Area: Poverty, substance abuse, low high school graduation rates, and high unemployment rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted• CED Strategy completed | <p>Presented a tourism and branding report for the Page County Economic Development and Tourism department. CAN's assessment found that investing in outdoor recreation would have the most positive impact as an economic development strategy.</p> |
| QUAPAW, OK CU & TOWN OF QUAPAW Area of Focus: Safe housing, improve economic growth and maximize access to community planning after portions of the town were devastated by a tornado in 2014. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership team trained• WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted• CED Strategy completed• Value Chain developed• Implementation TA provided | <p>REDI helped build a cohesive leadership team and community sustainability strategy that has helped prioritize a new housing development proposal supported by both the community and an area Native American Tribal entity.</p> <p>The leadership team is now researching funding possibilities for the housing project to supplement the grant funding they have received from the Tribal partners.</p> |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|--|---|---|
| ROCKBRIDGE, VA CAN & COUNTY OF ROCKBRIDGE | Focus Area: Downtown Development and Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted | CAN conducted Public Forums and Focus Groups on Downtown Revitalization; Tourism and Outdoor Recreation; Workforce Development and Manufacturing; IT and Technology; and Education Partnerships. These sessions helped produce the Rockbridge Strategic Roadmap, a set of recommendations to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the greater Rockbridge Region. |
| SHIPROCK AZTEC, NM RCAC & SHIPROCK CHAPTER OF THE NAVAJO NATION | Focus Area: Downtown Development and Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | REDI allowed for community meetings and a space for native leaders, community members and all with an interest in the community to voice their input on economic development activities and priorities culminating in the River Vision Project. The group was awarded a \$264,991 Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to assist in planning and architectural work for the project, however funding was retracted due to a change in Chapter leadership and a shift in local priorities. RCAC secured funding to continue assisting Shiprock CDC through 2023 with organizational capacity building. |
| SOUTHERN APACHE COUNTY, AZ RCAC & THE FOUNDATION FOR LITTLE COLORADO REVITALIZATION (FLCR) | Focus Area: Broadband, mental health, business development and education services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | RCAC helped FLCR secure \$2,093,000 in funding to develop a locally based mobile slaughterhouse and processing facility that will help local farmers and ranchers reduce the cost to provide locally raised fresh meat to grocers in the southern part of the county. Southern Apache County had no USDA-approved meat processing facilities, and the nearest one to Springerville was more than 200 miles away. |

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|
| SOUTHWEST, CO RCAC & SOUTHWEST COLORADO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (SWCCOG) | Focus Area: Economic diversification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | SWCCOG received a Dept. of Local Affairs grant for \$49,000 to support the Remote Worker Training Program as well as the expansion of the small business accelerator. The remote training worker program is an outcome of the 2020 REDI WealthWorks planning process. |
| TIOGA COUNTY, NY CR & TIOGA COUNTY RURAL ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP | Focus Area: Housing and Community Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed | REDI helped Tioga County bring stakeholders together, work through a SWOT, introduce WealthWorks, and move forward in key sectors, such as small business development and agritourism. The end result was an action plan for moving forward in key sectors. |
| VERNON, MO MAP & VERNON COUNTY | Focus Area: Affordable Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CED Strategy completed | As a result of the planning process, Vernon county hired an economic development professional to assist and direct future economic development activities such as workforce development, housing, business retention/expansion, and business opportunity creation. |

Communities and Technical Assistance

COMMUNITY & TEAMS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED

KEY OUTCOMES

VICKSBURG, MS

CU & VICKSBURG

Focus Area: Workforce development and entrepreneurship training

- Leadership team trained
- WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted
- CED Strategy completed
- Value Chain developed
- Implementation TA provided

A leadership team was established at local a school with 5 core members.

The team created a plan to develop student entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurship team developed a series of training webinars.

WASHOE TRIBE, NV & CA

RCAC & WASHOE TRIBE

Focus Area: Economic Development integrating Washoe Nation Values

- Leadership team trained
- WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted
- CED Strategy completed
- Value Chain developed

Engaged in a four-stage facilitation process (designed by the tribe) to ensure a bottom-up approach that reflected the Washoe Nation's values. Through these workshops, participants developed value chains centered on four catalytic strategies - tourism, health and wellness, food sovereignty, and renewable energy RCAC secured additional resources to continue working with the tribe and building the capacity of the Washoe Development Corporation.

Communities and Technical Assistance

| COMMUNITY & TEAMS | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERED | KEY OUTCOMES |
|---|--|--|
| <p>WEST HUNTINGTON, WV</p> <p>CAN & WEST HUNTINGTON</p> | <p>Focus Area: Creative Placemaking and Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • Value Chain developed • Implementation TA provided | <p>14th Street District Plan completed.</p> <p>A non-profit, RenewalAll, and social enterprise was launched combining antiquing, culture, placemaking, and history in a very unique enterprise concept. Coalfield Development is providing technical assistance and on-going support.</p> |
| <p>WESTERN ALLIANCE, ID</p> <p>RDI AND WESTERN ALLIANCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> | <p>Focus Area: Strengthen the federally-designated Idaho Economic Development District #3 in Southwestern Idaho.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team trained • WealthWorks Community Assessment conducted • CED Strategy completed | <p>REDI supported the Western Alliance for Economic Development (WAED) to engage representatives from 10 counties in a regional planning process to lay the groundwork for a CEDS in order to position Region III - a 10 county region - to be a functional Economic Development District (EDD) again after it had collapsed in 2015.</p> <p>REDI supported multiple workshops and a survey, and the results are being used to communicate with regional leaders and develop a business plan and access resources for the district's re-establishment.</p> |



Resilience in Action

NATIVE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NADC), MT (NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE) AND RCAC

Just as the REDI workshops were about to kick-off (marketing and registration was well underway) the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation shut down as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. RCAC and NADC had to move the workshops to a virtual platform in order to continue the sessions with the Northern Cheyenne community. This was made even more difficult by the lack of internet connectivity on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

RCAC and NADC worked to overcome these obstacles by creating an entirely new multimedia curriculum. This was accomplished through a unique combination of short, pre-recorded training modules pre-loaded onto iPads, a hardcopy workbook with handouts and six interactive virtual sessions, which were accessible through the internet and/or phones.

RCAC leveraged funds to support a Community Coordinator position for NADC who was trained in RCAC's Recharge Our Community's Economy (ROCE) and Start, Grow, Revive Your Business (SGR) curricula. Additionally, RCAC also raised funds to support a staff person who worked with the local, Native nonprofit, People's Partners for Community Development, who assisted in marketing and recruiting participants for the ROCE trainings.

After REDI was completed, RCAC continued to work with NADC and continued to support their Community Coordinator position and trained community members in Northern Cheyenne on entrepreneurship and small business development. As a result of RCAC's ROCE training, "Rosebud Tipis", a Northern Cheyenne entrepreneur, was awarded \$10,000 for the MT Indian Equity Fund. The funds were used to install water and electrical infrastructure and to purchase equipment (Tipis) for the camp.



The Wealth Works Technical Assistance Network in Action

COUNTY OF PRESIDIO, CITY OF MARFA, AND CITY OF PRESIDIO, TX AND COMMUNITIES UNLIMITED

In 2019, REDI facilitated the development of a local Community Leadership Team (CLT) with participants from the towns of Marfa and Presidio and rural County residents. Communities Unlimited (CU) provided Wealth Works training and the CLT identified Natural, Cultural and Social Wealth as important local assets. The CLT and CU completed a SWOT Analysis, Market Gap Analysis, CEDS review, and discussed economic development and Value Chain opportunities.

The impact of COVID after February 2020 necessitated a pivot to virtual convenings of the CLT and work groups as well as a narrowing of scope in future projects. The CLT had previously identified multiple important areas for possible future Value Chain development, including: affordable housing given limited construction market; the need for urgent care health facilities in Presidio which is 1.5 hr from nearest hospital in Alpine; opportunities to engage the most locally-rooted small scale entrepreneurs in the outdoor recreational and arts tourism industries, and possible synergies in shared solid waste management, recycling and composting.

In part due to COVID, the CLT selected solid waste, recycling and composting as a more achievable first-step. Marfa has strong demand for recycling, but is remote and transportation costs can be high. Presidio was about to apply for a new landfill permit and agreed to explore the possibility of a recycling consolidation adjacent to the newly updated Texas Pacifico/South Orient railroad. As part of REDI implementation, Marfa was included in a recent FY22 USDA RD Solid Waste Management Technical Assistance award and this work is currently active.

At the end of REDI, CU also collaborated with the Rio Grande Council of Governments, local SBDC, and CU Entrepreneurship and CDFI Lending Teams to provide a virtual small business outreach webinar. This outreach directly led to CU Entrepreneurship management consulting and CU loans for two local start-up businesses: a small local bookstore, Stop & Read Books, in Marfa; and also to Marfa Meats, the first local small-scale meat processing facility for many decades in this area of significant historic ranching and cattle production. Opportunities remain in affordable housing development, urgent care/tele-health at Presidio, and deepening rooted local entrepreneurship.

National WealthWorks Train the Trainer Program

A national WealthWorks training was held at RCAP's annual National Conference on July 29-August 1, 2019 for more than 200 RCAP team members across the country. The purpose of the training was to equip RCAP's network of technical assistance providers (TAPs) with expertise on the WealthWorks framework and build their capacity to function as "scouts" on the ground to identify communities that might be ready for WealthWorks coaching to start the economic development planning process. As part of this training, RCAP delivered a plenary session, "Rural Economic Development Benefits Everyone", to more than 200 participants, explaining the Wealthworks model and creating WealthWorks Scouts. Three speakers, Deb Martin from the Great Lakes CAP, Tommy Ricks from Communities Unlimited, and Blanca Surgeon from RCAC presented. Heidi Sheppard, RCAP, served as the session moderator. Additionally, RCAP delivered a ¾ day workshop, "Aiming for WealthWorks Success", that trained over 50 attendees on the practice of applying the model in communities. RCAP has continued to provide related interactive workshops at its 2020 and 2021 virtual national conferences to continue to educate and build capacity for its growing network of over 300 boots on the ground TAPs.

KEY OUTCOMES

The training allowed RCAP regional partners to better understand how WealthWorks Hubs operate and equipped field staff with the ability to deliver WealthWorks planning to fill gaps not currently served by the Hubs. RCAP's regional partners reported that the training allowed their organizations to expand internal capacity and rural capacity more broadly by allowing them to work alongside new partners and communities, assisting communities / local entities in identifying community economic development priorities, and developing Action Plans for implementation. In 2021 RCAP's regional partners included WealthWorks as a core pillar of RCAP's community and economic development five-year strategic plan, and in 2022 RCAP hired a community and economic development specialist to help activate the network's CED strategy.



Peer Learning Summits

Four national Peer Learning Summits were hosted by RCAP, the Aspen Institute, NADO, and the WealthWorks hubs. Originally partners had planned to host one in-person summit, however with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the summit had to be moved online. As a result, partners hosted three additional peer learning events based on community feedback and need.

All our value chains across the country were invited to the Summit however participation varied as communities were still reeling and distracted by COVID impacts within their workplaces and personal lives. The Summit covered the Community Capitals model in detail, with opportunities for peer learning for value chain practitioners.

- **Initial Learning Summit: September 23, 2020**
 - Collaboration, Engagement, Participation
 - Inclusion and Local Ownership
 - Local Ownership & Control
 - Funding and the Continuation of the REDI Project Work
- **Wealth Works Peer to Peer Learning - 1 : February 16, 2021**
 - Local Foods
 - Recreation & Tourism
 - Entrepreneurship
- **Wealth Works Peer to Peer Learning - 2 : March 8, 2021**
 - Workforce Development
 - Energy
 - Forestry
- **Wealth Works Peer to Peer Learning - 3 : March 22, 2021**
 - Broadband
 - Infrastructure
 - Services

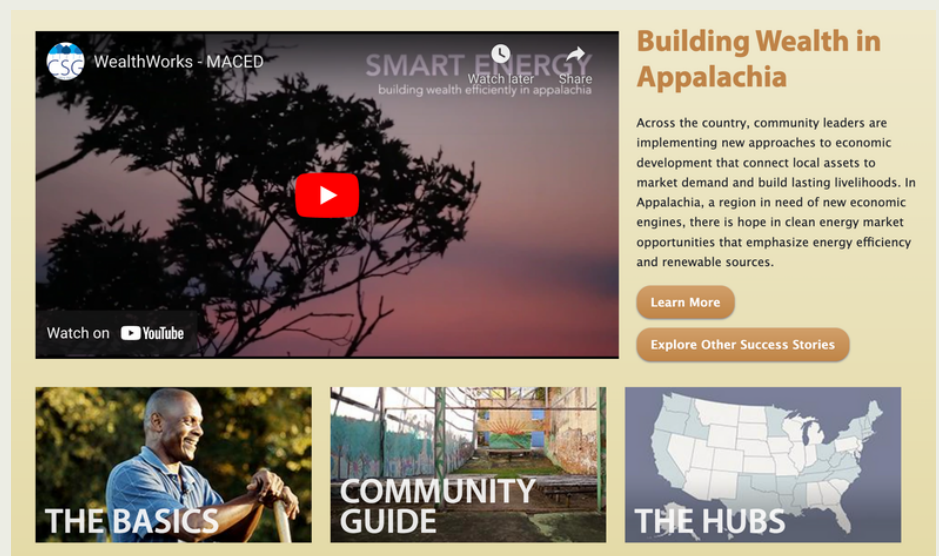
KEY OUTCOMES

In post-event surveys, participants reported that having an opportunity to hear from others their challenges and discuss solutions was the most important outcome from the Peer Learning Summit and workshops delivered throughout the program.

The additional peer learning events hosted after the initial summit in September 2020 were the result of feedback from WealthWorks technical assistance providers and communities who wanted to dive deeper into some of the sectors / priority areas communities were focused on.

The WealthWorks Web Based Training Hub

A CONVENIENT AND USEFUL WEB BASED TRAINING TOOL



Building Wealth in Appalachia

Across the country, community leaders are implementing new approaches to economic development that connect local assets to market demand and build lasting livelihoods. In Appalachia, a region in need of new economic engines, there is hope in clean energy market opportunities that emphasize energy efficiency and renewable sources.

[Learn More](#)

[Explore Other Success Stories](#)

THE BASICS

COMMUNITY GUIDE

THE HUBS

In order to ensure that the WealthWorks framework remained available for assessment, planning and implementation beyond REDI's three-year timeframe, the Aspen Institute, with the support of the WealthWorks Hubs, expanded the existing www.WealthWorks.org site with interactive training tools for communities interested in utilizing the WealthWorks approach when the resources of a regional hub are not directly available. The tools provide opportunities for communities to share their stories through case studies which share challenges, opportunities, and best practices. The tools contain a variety of economic development resource material to help communities get started, gain how-to information on working with value chains, and review videos and profiles of what other groups are doing around the country.

What We Learned

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

The most challenging aspect of implementing REDI and RCAP's WealthWorks Technical Assistance Program was the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the WealthWorks hubs had to completely halt their work due to a lack of broadband, staff turnover, and communities' need to prioritize more immediate concerns related to the pandemic. Most of RCAP's REDI communities were able to continue on in some form or another by moving meetings online or by phone; however some projects, particularly those in tribal communities where there was no broadband or sufficient telecommunications infrastructure, had to stop completely.

At the same time, the REDI program and WealthWorks technical assistance helped provide communities with the tools and scaffolding needed to pivot and respond to the impacts of COVID. As can be seen by the case studies and outcome summaries included in this report, the planning assistance communities received helped attract over \$4.9 million in new funding, create new programs, launch new enterprises and connect communities to a national network of peers where they could share strategies, solutions and support.

REDI INNOVATION

Several innovative solutions emerged like the MT Tribes Lending Library that allowed community members to borrow or check out an iPad with RCAC's recorded trainings loaded on each device so that WealthWorks technical assistance could continue in the absence of adequate broadband and the inability to do live training. RCAC raised funds to leverage REDI and was able to purchase hardware (iPads) and convert their curricula to virtual and recorded sessions for each device. This innovation not only helped carry forward the community based trainings and engage those that may not have been able to participate, but presents a proven model for replication and future investment for communities lacking broadband access.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Built the capacity of **30 rural leadership teams in 21 States**.
- WealthWorks Hubs helped communities **unlock \$4.9 million in funding to activate their plans**.
- RCAP **successfully established a network of 300+ WealthWorks technical assistance providers** that have a presence in every state and Puerto Rico.
- **77% of REDI communities completed a community economic development plan**.
- **73% of communities are continuing to activate strategies and projects** identified through the WealthWorks process.
- **5,870 hours of TA provided**. This is a **460% increase** over the 1,050 TA hours originally contracted.
- **WealthWorks codified into RCAP's national strategic plan** and adopted by all 6 regional partners.

What We Learned

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM IMPACTS

Despite disruptions caused by COVID-19, RCAP was still able to exceed the targets established for this program, providing technical assistance to 30 communities, 73% of which are continuing to activate strategies and projects identified through the WealthWorks planning and implementation process, and 30% that successfully secured funding as a result of the REDI assistance they received.

Additionally, the WealthWorks framework has been codified in RCAP's national strategic plan as a core pillar of RCAP's community and economic development work moving forward. The strategic plan and emphasis on WealthWorks was produced and adopted by all 6 regional RCAP partners and ensures that the WealthWorks model will continue to be integrated into RCAP's suite of technical assistance services to rural communities across the U.S. and its territories and tribal lands. The WealthWorks Peer Learning Network continues to meet monthly through NADO and the WealthWorks online learning hub (www.WealthWorks.org) continues to be updated and managed by the Aspen Institute's Community Strategies Group.

Through REDI, I have learned the value of technical assistance to keep focused on our goals and how to move toward them strategically.

- Community Survey Respondent, 2020 Peer Learning Summit

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

LEVERAGING OUR COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT

The REDI initiative presented a compelling opportunity for RCAP's network to scale and promote the WealthWorks model as well as build national partners' capacity to work collaboratively, expand their reach to new communities and connect communities with new sources of federal, state and private funding. Given the time and work that went into launching REDI and building a national network of communities equipped to do economic development differently, our hope is that the program will continue to be funded and that cooperators will have the opportunity to make improvements moving forward. The following are some of the lessons learned and recommendations for future implementation.

COMMUNITY SELECTION PROCESS + TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

While WealthWorks Hubs appreciated the opportunity to work with new communities, the two-year timeframe to build relationships and the trust necessary to be able to do comprehensive community economic development at the standard required to produce strong results, was too short. Moving forward RCAP recommends extending the timeframe for implementation to 3-5 years to allow for adequate relationship and trust building to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Additionally, having the ability to work more closely with the USDA Innovation Center, state and area offices during the community vetting and selection process, would help WealthWorks hubs ensure that the community is a good match for the kind of planning approach WealthWorks provides. Many of the challenges getting started in some REDI communities had to do with a misalignment between what the community wanted and what the WealthWorks process delivers. Being able to be part of the initial onboarding / selection process could help accelerate implementation and lead to optimal outcomes.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOURCING

Related to the challenges of working with new communities in a short period, was the issue of adequate resourcing for the work. As summarized in the community outcomes throughout this report, providing this level of technical assistance support is time and resource intensive even without a pandemic.

RCAP's partners were contracted to provide 1,050 hours of technical assistance planning and implementation support to up to 36 communities. Partners contributed nearly 6,000 hours of technical assistance to 30 communities over an extended grant period without additional resources to carry out the work. Now that we have the data and a better understanding of what it takes to provide this level of technical assistance, especially in new communities where we are just starting relationships, it will be important to revisit scopes of work and the level of funding needed to properly resource this type of work in the future.

The WealthWorks model is an excellent tool and can be shaped to explore, discover and assist communities in raising, planting and rooting local, regional community economic development given enough time and resources. With the \$492K investment received from the USDA's Innovation Center, RCAP's WealthWorks Technical Assistance Network Program was able to leverage \$4.9 million in new funding for our REDI communities. With a national strategy in place and network of 300+ technical assistance providers equipped to assist even more rural communities with WealthWorks planning support, RCAP and its network of partners look forward to future opportunities to partner with the USDA Innovation Center on similar initiatives.

Again we thank the USDA Innovation Center for the opportunity to be a partner in launching the REDI program. We are proud of what our network of partners and communities were able to accomplish over the course of this program and hope that the outcomes achieved and lessons learned will lead to continued resourcing and efforts to advance economic development innovation in rural America.