

A Look at NeighborWorks Montana's Real Estate Development and Acquisition Program

The Real Estate Development and Acquisition Program (REDA) at NeighborWorks Montana has been helping to fund short term financing needs for housing projects across Montana since 2008. During that time, we have financed over 30 projects totaling nearly 1300 units of housing. The REDA program provides funding for pre-development of rental housing projects, most often those using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program as a major funding source. The program also provides gap funding for projects with specific needs such as Resident Owned communities, land acquisition funding, and other funding that fits the needs of the projects. Because of the funding for the REDA program, NWMT is able to be very flexible and craft terms to meet these needs.



In 2016 NWMT funded a very special project through the REDA program—the Helena YWCA. The YWCA's mission is to provide safe and supportive housing for women and children experiencing homelessness, while initiating accessibility to services that restore hope, self-sufficiency and happy and healthy lives. 77% of the women served experienced chronic homelessness before moving to the YWCA and over 50% of the women who lived at the YWCA were able to move into permanent housing. The YWCA recently completed a major renovation project of the circa 1918 building in downtown Helena. Significant funds were raised to complete the renovation costs of over \$2.6 million, including historic tax credits, CDBG, HOME and private funding. Although all these funds were raised, the YWCA was \$75,000 short of raising the total funds needed to complete the renovation. NWMT provided a very flexible 5-year loan to the YWCA which can be paid off at anytime.

NWMT is thrilled to be able to assist the YWCA with this project that provides 26 units of housing to some of the most vulnerable populations in the Helena area. The renovation upgraded the safety and accessibility of the building, provided modern bathroom and kitchen facilities, and helped configure the rooms to more appropriately accommodate the needs of the women and children served.



News you can use!



Welcome to Danielle Maiden, NWMT Cooperative Housing Specialist

We are so excited to introduce you to the newest NeighborWorks Montana employee, Danielle Maiden. Danielle will fill the role of Cooperative Housing Specialist working with our Resident Owned Communities. Danielle is a 5th generation Montanan who loves all things Montana. She has worked in the non-profit world in some capacity since she graduated from high school. She is a graduate of University of Montana and Gonzaga. Most of her professional career has been spent working in various human service agencies. She is looking forward to working for NeighborWorks, as she believes housing is the base of a families success. She has a desire to help cultivate and develop strong communities in cities across Montana.

Welcome Danielle! We are excited to have you on board. You can contact Danielle by emailing her at dmaiden@nwmt.org.

Statewide Housing Conference May 8-10, 2017 in Great Falls

Each year the Montana Housing Partnership teams up to put on a statewide housing conference. This conference would not be possible without the incredible support of generous sponsors. If you're interested in sponsoring the housing conference [please click here](#). You can fill it out and return to Katie Biggs at kbiggs@nwmt.org.

Please stay tuned for conference registration information. Our website should be live in the next week.



Health and Housing: Surveying a Resident Owned Community

In an era of big data non-profits like NWMT are being asked to be morerigorous in our collection and analysis of data, and our definition andtracking of the impact of our work. While we have collected a lot of data inthe past we have not always used that data to its full potential, to inform ourdecision making and answer questions like “do the assumptions we have about ourwork match the reality?” and “where can we have the biggest impact?” Anotherchallenge we face is in getting data that is specific to the communities andpeople we serve. National level, and even state level, data does not alwaysprovide a clear picture of what is happening on the ground in the diversecommunities in which we work. Through a tool developed by NeighborWorks

Americacalled Success Measures we have a new way to address some of these challenges.Success Measures provides a variety of survey tools that have been tested inmultiple settings, along with a data input, and tracking system to make surveyeasy to implement and to analyze. In addition NWMT



has received some coaching from Success Measures staff to help us understand how to appropriately implement surveys, and analyze data.

A survey at Buena Vista, a resident owned community in Missoula, this past summer was our first attempt to use Success Measures to collect neighborhood level data and use that data to answer questions like those posed above. The insights from this survey are already guiding the work of a new initiative we are involved in to work with residents at Buena Vista to improve their housing and their health. A couple of insights from the survey have been particularly useful such as recognizing there is a high percentage of people in the community who have disabilities. This is leading us to seek out partnerships with others who already have the resources to build ramps and make improvements to homes so they are safe and accessible. This data point also gives us the idea that although people want to improve their homes they may not be able to do the work themselves. This leads us to conversations about whether coordinating volunteer labor would be of interest to residents as a low-cost way to help improve housing. [Check out the survey results here.](#) What insights do you have in looking at this data? We will share more with you in future months about this initiative, and we will keep learning how to improve our collection of and use of data in ways that make our work more effective.

