



City of Medford

Planning Department

Working with the community to shape a vibrant and exceptional city

A WHITE PAPER

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS; NOT YOUR TYPICAL CORPORATION

Community, development, and corporation. All three words, individually, have very different meanings; however when combined together, they collectively have a meaning far different from any one of the individual definitions. Community Development Corporations (CDCs), are not typical corporations; often times a CDC is the exact opposite of what is traditionally thought of when looking at a corporation.

Where, the typical “corporation” invests in things like big box stores, large parking lots and the CEO’s wallets; CDCs invest in affordable housing, education, parks, Farmer’s Markets, networking events, and like the name implies the community. Let’s take a moment to discuss some of the common roles a community development corporation plays in a community, who in the community can make up a CDC, and some possible applications of CDCs in Medford.

CREATING A CORPORATION FOR THE COMMUNITY

Corporations, regardless if it is a CDC or Walmart, require a mixture of people and organizations to see its goals accomplished. The early days of a CDC are often spent building the capacity needed to impact the community, making research and community outreach an important item early on to drive the development of a CDC. Exploration is often needed to determine the roles a CDC will play in a community.

This exploration stage can start with a small group, and through their research this will determine the needs of the community whether that be business development, affordable housing construction, or community education. Research can be achieved through a neighborhood analysis, market studies, Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals, or other similar high-level planning research. Once the role is determined, it will be a lot easier to know who to invite to participate in the efforts of the CDC and the roles to take on as a CDC.

ROLES OF A CDC

The roles of a CDC within a community vary from developing commercial or residential buildings to providing after school youth programming. Often times a market study or a

neighborhood plan precedes the creation of a CDC; citing the CDC as a potential resource\need for specific outcomes within the research (i.e. community development) as either a primary or secondary supporter in accomplishing a specific task. A community's needs mold the role of a community development corporation, not the other way around. Some common examples of a\ roles CDCs can play include:

- **Non-Profit Broker** – connecting local leaders, public officials, builders, developers, and financiers to promote and develop affordable housing.
- **Business and Home Buying Counseling** - identify potential clients\buyers, provide classes, and help with financing for business and home owners
- **Joint Venture** – a partnership with an experienced builder to provide knowledge of the community that the builder\developer doesn't have
- **Land Developer** – buy land, then subdivide it, and then construct the needed infrastructure to in turn sell the land for the purpose of affordable development
- **Single-Family\Multi-Family Developer** – acquire property, construct\rehabilitate the housing, and then sell it, taking on the full risk of development

After the need for a CDC is determined various programmatic and engagement strategies are used to further the goals of the community and its newest corporation. Some common examples of these strategies include:

- **Empowerment Strategies** – Development and investment in human capital to increase life skills through programs, classes, and counseling; this in turn enables residents to better participate in the local economic, social, and civic life.
- **Project & Neighborhood Planning** – The bringing together of community groups through the creation of committees and\or advisory boards to advise the creation of plans tied to revitalization projects based on community input.
- **Community Capacity Building** – A CDC will offer organizational and technical assistance to give to other individuals/organizations that in turn strengthen the efforts of the individuals\organizations using the programs\assistance offered

The overall outcome of CDC can be very specific and tangible like neighborhood redevelopment or the creation of a park; it can also be broad like improving financial literacy or engaging the local population in decision making. Regardless of the goals of a CDC, Medford, like all communities, can greatly benefit from an effective CDC.

MEDFORD AND CDCS

Currently within Medford and the Rogue Valley there exist several community development corporations, each with its own goals and objectives. Some local examples include:

- **Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (SOREDI) www.soredi.org** – Aimed at providing services to businesses through various counseling, empowerment strategies, and capacity building.

- **Aging Community Coordinated Enterprises & Supportive Services (ACCESS)**
www.accesshelps.org/index.asp - ACCESS provides a mixture of services from providing affordable housing, house weatherization, financial and health counseling, and many other services for low-income and aging residents of the Rogue Valley
- **Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation** www.gacdc.org – Originally started to improve a local park and now aims at providing capacity for the Applegate watershed and the various efforts of the community.

The CDCs already in Medford take on many different roles, often not fitting into one category discussed above. In understanding the already existing organizations one can see what is needed and then what already works in the region. With a fast growing city, resurging downtown, interest in downtown adjacent neighborhoods, and a housing need outpacing population growth, the need for more CDCs exist, the question is, who is next?

For more reading, please visit:

<https://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/cdcs/index.html>

<https://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/tool-breaking-ground.pdf>

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/51661/311217-The-Impact-of-Community-Development-Corporations-on-Urban-Neighborhoods.PDF>

It is important to note that a CDC is not to be confused with the Medford Urban Renewal Agency (MURA). MURA is a taxing district aimed at improving the district in which it generates tax increment financing, a CDC is a non-profit agency aimed at community revitalization. The two can be partners, but are entirely separate entities.