

## **Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) Awarded \$200,000 USDA-Rural Cooperative Development Grant to Spearhead Housing Cooperative Solutions Across Montana**

**[Great Falls, Montana October 2023]** — The Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) is delighted to announce its recent receipt of \$200,000 USDA-Rural Cooperative Development Grant. This funding will empower MCDC to continue its crucial mission of fostering cooperative solutions for community and economic needs in Montana. MCDC is the sole statewide cooperative development center dedicated to introducing cooperative initiatives, and this grant will further strengthen its resolve to bring about positive change across the state.

MCDC's workplan for the upcoming year will involve a strategic partnership with the Cooperative Development Foundation, a national organization, and the Affordable Housing Initiative to introduce innovative cooperative housing solutions to the diverse communities of Montana. With an emphasis on senior, senior care, and workforce housing, MCDC will bring to Montana models that have a proven track record of success throughout the United States. This collaboration marks an exciting milestone in addressing the pressing housing needs of Montanans.

Cooperative housing allows residents to more efficiently pool their resources to own the housing units which may include multi-unit buildings or scattered single family homes. The Cooperative model allows the owners to design the management, services, and overall, how the resident-owners can control their own housing solution. As Montana continues to age, and senior care resources continue to dwindle, MCDC and national partners are seeing more and more interest from Seniors in coming together to support their housing and care needs.

The USDA-Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) will not only support the advancement of housing cooperatives but also enable MCDC to maintain its commitment to providing high-quality services for a wide range of community issues. Beyond housing, MCDC will continue its efforts in addressing crucial matters such as succession planning, childcare solutions, access to essential services such as grocery stores and main street businesses, and the promotion of value-added agriculture and processing. MCDC has seen a 40% increase in the demand for their services since 2019 and is currently working with 13 different groups to build local solutions to needs including creating investment cooperatives to pool financial resources for local opportunities.

MCDC's President, Erik Somerfeld, expressed gratitude for the USDA's recognition of their vital work, stating, "We are honored to once again receive this grant from the USDA, which will allow us to expand our cooperative development initiatives and make a meaningful impact Montana. Our mission, to promote and develop cooperatives to meet the economic and community needs in rural Montana, has always been at the heart of everything we do. With this support, we are excited to continue our work in Montana."

The grant from the USDA will further empower MCDC to fulfill this mission and continue its positive impact on rural communities across the state. The partnership between MCDC, the National Cooperative Development Foundation, and the Affordable Housing Initiative reflects a collaborative effort to bring about positive change, improve living conditions, and strengthen communities across Montana. By addressing housing issues and other pressing community needs, MCDC aims to enhance the well-being and economic prosperity of Montanans.

For further information, please contact:

Tracy McIntyre  
Executive Director  
Montana Cooperative Development Center  
[www.mcdc.coop](http://www.mcdc.coop)  
406-727-1517  
[mcdc@mcdc.coop](mailto:mcdc@mcdc.coop)

About Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC):

Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) is Montana's premier cooperative development organization, dedicated to empowering communities with cooperative solutions. MCDC collaborates with individuals, businesses, and organizations across Montana to create economic opportunities, foster sustainable practices, and address pressing community needs through the cooperative model. With a focus on housing, succession planning, childcare, essential services, and more, MCDC plays a pivotal role in building stronger, more resilient communities throughout the state.