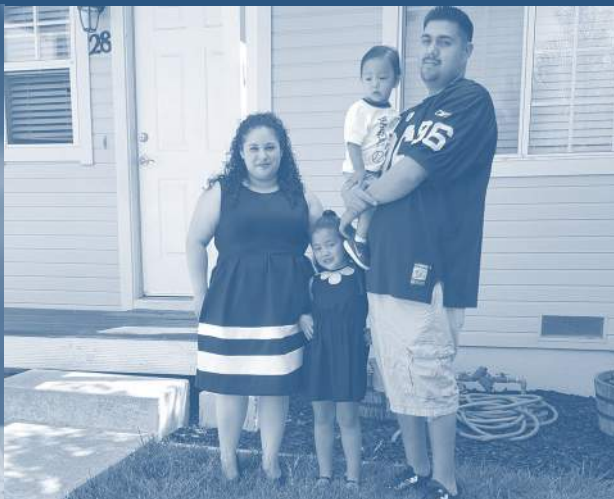


# HOME Success Stories

Montana



The HOME Coalition  
2015

## CONTACT

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## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Location:** Sidney

**Project:** Rental Housing Development

**HOME:** \$750,000

**Total Cost:** \$6.9M

**Other Federal:** \$4.8M  
Low Income Housing Tax Credits

**Units:** 36

**District:** MT-01

# HOME SUCCESS STORY

## Montana

### Mountain Plains Equity Group

Mountain Plains Equity Group (MPEG) is based in Billings, Montana and was founded in 2003. MPEG is dedicated to the financing and development of affordable housing to promote and support sustainable growth in local communities.

With a focus on low-income residents in Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming, MPEG currently maintains a portfolio of 1,090 units, representing over \$140 million in total development costs. In addition, MPEG provides asset management services to the North Dakota and Alaska state housing finance agencies, overseeing the development and management of four additional projects with a total of 144 units.

HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds make it possible for MPEG to finance projects where there is a critical need for low-income housing.

### Sunset Village Apartments

Rural Sidney, Montana, is located within the area commonly known as the “Bakken,” an oil shale formation that spans northeast Montana and northwest North Dakota. Due to the significant increases in oil and gas production activity, this area has experienced rapid population growth, housing shortages, and dramatically increased rents.

The Sunset Village Apartment development—scheduled to be completed in 2016—will help address the critical shortage of affordable housing for low-income families in Sidney and the surrounding Richland County. This 36-unit development will replace 28 deteriorating public housing units that have reached the end of their useful life, while adding an additional eight units of affordable housing stock.



All of the apartments will be exclusively targeted to serving low-income households earning 40 to 60 percent of the area median income. The development will also include a community room, playground, and community garden and is within walking distance to recreation facilities, shopping, and schools.

Along with being a member of the development team, MPEG is an owner and partner with the Richland County Housing Authority. Together, these entities combined their financial capabilities, management expertise, and experience to develop the Sunset Village project and other similar projects.

HOME played a critical role in making this project possible. Although the Richland County Housing Authority generously donated the land parcel, Sunset Village faced a sizeable gap in financing because of the extremely high cost of construction. Without HOME, the project would not have been able to move forward.



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## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Location:** Great Falls

**Project:** Homebuyer Assistance

**HOME:** \$40,000

**Total Cost:** \$270,000

**Other Federal:** \$15,000  
Community Development Block Grants

**Units:** 2

**District:** MT-01

# HOME SUCCESS STORY

## Montana

### NeighborWorks Great Falls

NeighborWorks Great Falls' (NWGF) mission is to build strong neighborhoods, create successful homeowners, and promote quality, affordable housing, primarily for low- and moderate-income families in Montana.

Since 1980, NWGF has revitalized declining neighborhoods and provided affordable housing to low-income families. As a result, NWGF has helped increase property tax revenues by \$4.5 million, decrease vacancy rates from 16 to just 2 percent, build 130 new homes, repair or remove more than 400 dilapidated structures, and spur over \$100 million in private and public investment.

NeighborWorks Great Falls uses HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds to construct and renovate single-family homes and to provide gap financing in the form of deferred mortgages to help families become homeowners.

### High School House Project

Since 1997, NWGF has partnered with the local school district to create an innovative program to provide on-the-job training to students as they build homes for low-income families who could not otherwise afford them.

Under the High School House program, students from local high schools' Advanced Building Trade classes help build the homes from dirt to doorknobs, learning construction and soft job skills. Students from other classes, such as metal working, interior design, and landscaping, also contribute to the home construction. NWGF serves as the general contractor, provides the building lots, and sells the homes when they are completed to low-income families at a price they can afford. The City of Great Falls and local business partners contribute to the program's success. For example, Falls Construction provides the excavation for all the homes at no charge. And, because the home replaces a former blighted building, the entire neighborhood benefits.

Without HOME, the High School House program would not be able to serve as many low-income families. NWGF uses HOME funds to provide financing for construction, as well as deferred mortgages to fill the gap between what families can afford to pay and the cost to build the home. To date, NWGF has used more than \$870,000 in HOME-financed deferred mortgages, \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and \$150,000 in Self-Help Homeownership Opportunities Program (SHOP) funds under the program.

By December 2015, more than 35 low-income families will have become homeowners and approximately 900 students will have gained critical training and work experience through the program. This year alone, two families will become homeowners.



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## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Location:** Helena

**Project:** Special Needs Rental Housing Development

**HOME:** \$253,000

**Total Cost:** \$1.4M

**Other Federal:** \$450,000 Community Development Block Grants

**Units:** 6

**District:** MT-01

# HOME SUCCESS STORY

## Montana

### West Mont

West Mont is a nonprofit, charitable organization that has been helping Montanans since 1973 by providing a wide range of services for people with developmental disabilities to help them reach their maximum potential. West Mont currently operates 12 group homes and four vocational centers that provide nursing care, respite, employment opportunities, and social activities.

All West Mont residents earn low or very low incomes, are disabled, and are eligible for Medicaid. Their rent is funded through Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program was the catalyst to complete the second of only two medical group homes designed and built for individuals with developmental disabilities in Montana. Without HOME, the project would not have come to fruition.

### Ron's Place

Over the last several years, the demand for long-term nursing care in Montana has increased significantly. Many residents have intensive medical needs and limited mobility. However, there are few options for medically fragile and terminally ill people with developmental disabilities in Montana. West Mont's Caldwell House is the only other medical group home that has been built in the state. It has been operating at maximum capacity since it opened, making the development of Ron's Place a top priority.

Ron's Place is a six-bedroom, medical group home, located in Helena, Montana. When completed in fall 2015, Ron's Place will not only help medically fragile residents remain in the community, but it will help the state save critical resources. Without Ron's Place, many residents would be forced to move into a state institution in Boulder, where the cost to taxpayers would be considerably higher. On average, community placement at the state institution costs taxpayers \$250,000, compared to just \$100,000 at Ron's Place. Other residents would have to live in nursing homes that are typically not suitable to their needs.

To help residents thrive, Ron's Place provides opportunities for social interaction. Additionally, the staff has been trained to provide the appropriate care necessary to meet each client's unique needs.

West Mont secured \$253,000 in HOME funds and \$450,000 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to develop this new project. Because it served as the initial capital investment, HOME helped West Mont attract the total \$1.4 million in financing it needed to complete the project.



Thanks to HOME, Ron's Place will be another step in the continuum of care that West Mont can provide its clients in order to serve them throughout all stages of their adult life.