



SOLVING THE HOUSING PUZZLE:

EDDs as Regional Housing Changemakers



is a comprehensive analysis of how Economic Development Districts (EDDs) have identified regional and local housing challenges and established what role they can play in improving housing outcomes in their region. These roles may include the EDD serving as a planner, land bank, financier, and/or builder.

This online resource includes tools for helping EDDs map their regional housing ecosystem, economic justifications for EDDs engaging in the sector, case studies on how EDDs found their role, and scenario planning examples EDDs can use to better understand their regional housing challenges. Solving the Housing Puzzle is offered through the NADO Research Foundation's Economic Development District Community of Practice of Practice (EDD CoP). Additional housing resources, trainings, and continued education opportunities for EDD program staff will be released in the future. See below for the key takeaways and case study summaries from ***Solving the Housing Puzzle***:

1. IDENTIFYING THE REGIONAL RESPONSE

EDDs must first identify what gaps are missing from their current regional response to housing and then work to establish an organizational role to best address those challenges. EDDs should identify developers working in communities, community-specific strategies from cities and counties, and non-profit housing and service provider groups on the ground to determine what role the regional organization will play. EDDs are nimble and responsive and can fill vital roles that other entities can't.

2. WHO IS AT THE TABLE

Regional housing planning strategies must be joined with local input and buy-in to meet the moment. Sourcing quality input and engagement from a diverse set of regional stakeholders is vital to ensuring strategies are implementable and realistic. EDDs should also ensure that stakeholders and partners have sufficient funding, authority, and desire to act on identified strategies.

3. CEDS AS A HOUSING PLANNING FORUM

EDDs have recognized the importance of housing as a regional economic asset through regional economic development planning efforts like the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Nearly 300 districts across the country have identified housing challenges and priorities in their CEDS. Districts can use this [HUD-produced resource](https://hudexchange.info/resource/5651/COORDINATING-LOCAL-PLANNING-EFFORTS-THE-CON-PLAN-AND-CEDS/) to integrate CEDS with other regional and local housing planning like the HUD Consolidated Plan.

[\(hudexchange.info/resource/5651/COORDINATING-LOCAL-PLANNING-EFFORTS-THE-CON-PLAN-AND-CEDS/\)](https://hudexchange.info/resource/5651/COORDINATING-LOCAL-PLANNING-EFFORTS-THE-CON-PLAN-AND-CEDS/)

4. A UNIQUELY REGIONAL RESPONSE

Each EDD has varying levels of staff capacity, different regional contexts, and a diversity of other entities working in their regions. These factors make every region's response to housing challenges unique and dependent on their region. In this same regard, EDDs have extensive staff experience they can draw on including experience managing federal and state funds, planning grant writing, RLFs, and other EDD-specific resources to support these efforts.

CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

Solving the Housing Puzzle includes several key case studies that demonstrate how regions have identified housing challenges in their region, established their role in this space, and are working to improve housing outcomes. Below are short summaries from the case studies featured in the larger report.



TURNING VOICES TO ACTION IN THE CENTRALINA REGION (THE PLANNING ROLE)

Many EDDs have utilized staff experience with planning and connections with local governments to advance housing solutions in their region. Centralina Council of Governments convened local leaders in two housing planning processes to mitigate housing challenges in the fast-growing Charlotte region. Through regional and local planning processes, Centralina COG has worked to prepare their communities for expanded housing-related federal and state funding opportunities.



LAND BANK-ING ON NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION (THE LAND BANK ROLE)

Region 1 Planning Council (RIPC) in northern Illinois has championed a uniquely regional land management program to foster the redevelopment of existing residential properties in distressed areas of its region. RIPC has effectively used an online, public-facing portal to facilitate real estate transactions and spur economic and community development in local communities.



FINANCING THE FUTURE IN SOUTH FLORIDA (THE FINANCIER ROLE)

South Florida Regional Planning Council (SFRPC) has faced extensive housing affordability challenges leading to negative economic outcomes for most of South Florida's low-moderate income residents. SFRPC staff have created a housing Revolving Loan Fund to provide needed funds and incentives for workforce housing and low-moderate income housing development.



BUILDING IOWA UP (THE HOUSING BUILDER ROLE)

Region XII Council of Governments (Region XII) has taken an active developer role and used unique funding opportunities to directly address affordable housing in its rural region. Region XII has built out this program over several years and has been able to match millions in federal and state funding with private support to improve rural housing outcomes.