



THE OHIO CDC ASSOCIATION

THE FIRST 20 YEARS

EARLY HISTORY:

OCDCA was organized in 1983-1984 through a grant made by the George Gund Foundation through the National Congress on Community Economic Development (NCCED), the national trade association for CDCs. NCCED started four state associations in the early 1980's, Ohio's among them.

The local nonprofit organization that sponsored OCDCA during its initial years, the NDC Association of Cincinnati, was a small organization that sponsored OCDCA during its initial years, the NDC Association of Cincinnati, was a small organization staffed entirely by volunteers but with a charismatic board president, Don Lenz, Executive Director of the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation. Don hired Patricia Barnes to direct the project charged with organizing OCDCA. She became Executive Director of OCDCA in 1985 and continues in that role today.

One of OCDCA's first initiatives was the creation of the CDC Grant Program. In Cleveland, Norm Krumholz, Director of the Center for Neighborhood Development, agreed to head a Task Force for OCDC that looked at state resources for affordable housing and community development.

Very little was available for community-based housing and economic development at the state level and the Center urged the group to ask the new Governor for a program dedicated to CDCs. Janice Cogger, also with the Center for Neighborhood Development, developed the initial program design for a statewide grant program for CDCs. Receptive to OCDCA's request, the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) agreed to request \$1 million in funding for housing and economic development projects in low to moderate income communities.

The request was included in the Governor's budget and in 1985 the legislature approved the "CDC Grant Program" as a part of its biennial budget. ODOD's Al Dietzel, together with Marnie Shaul and Roberta Garber, helped make this program happen.

OCDCA's next project, creation of the Ohio Community Development Finance Fund, was built on the successful experiences of CDCs in Lima and Cleveland with the linked deposit model. Bob Hudecek, with AmeriTrust Bank and a track record of arranging linked deposits, was very instrumental in promoting the linked deposit concept and making it the Finance Fund's first product offering.

From 1987-89, OCDCA organized a statewide Task Force, led by Jon Moorehead, Director of Columbus Neighborhood Housing Services, to guide the project. OCDCA raised initial operating and program funds to get the new corporation started. Roger McCauley of the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development was an important partner and helped the project to obtain broad support.

With commitments in hand for linked deposits from the Cleveland and Toledo and the Northern Ohio Episcopal Diocese, OCDCA convinced the Administration and legislature in 1989 to provide matching public funds through an expansion of the CDC Grant Program. Cindy Flaherty and Karen Kerns Dresser at the Ohio Housing Finance Agency as well as David Baker and Roberta Garber at ODOT played key roles in helping to start The Finance Fund. State funding for the Finance Fund continues to this day through the CDC Grant Program, in a set-aside in the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

1990-2000:

During the early 1990's, OCDCA participated in statewide efforts to educate the public about Issue 1, a ballot initiative to expand the state's powers to finance affordable housing and participated in discussions about the creation of an Ohio Housing Trust Fund. Over an 18 month period, as the enabling legislation for Issue 1 (House Bill 339), was drafted, OCDCA advocated for reduced state prevailing wages for housing targeted to low-income households and was instrumental in securing an exemption from state prevailing wage for nonprofit sponsored housing development.

In the area of micro-enterprise, OCDCA initiated policy development and programming that has built the capacity of over 50 micro-enterprise programs, secured dedicated state funding for micro-enterprise programs and training and technical assistance, and made it possible for welfare recipients to start businesses and hold assets. Theresa Chelkiowsky, on the staff of OCDCA, and Stephanie Bevens of CAC of Pike County provided leadership in establishing micro-enterprise as an important business and employment strategy at the state level.

Throughout the 1990's, OCDCA provided intensive training for CDCs in affordable housing development through a program called "Basic Skills in Affordable Housing Development", community economic development and micro-enterprise.

Key partners in the development of OCDCA's training programs include Richard Hendershot, Jorgelle Lawson, and Lana Vacha at the Columbus HUD Field Office, many staff members from the Ohio Department of Development and Ohio Housing Finance Agency, and such trainers as Tom Zuniga, Paul Webb, Lawrence Anderson, Andrea Levere, Theresia Pauuwe, Jackie LeBerth and Peg Barringer. To date, more than 1,500 CDC staff members have participated in OCDCA's workshops, training and technical assistance programs.

In 1995, OCDCA began a relationship with the Corporation for National Service to provide VISTA members for community-based development projects. This relationship expanded in 1998 with a special grant from the housing Trust Fund that pays living expenses for VISTA members to assist CDCs with affordable housing development.

Paul Schrader and Carolyn Bradley have been key supporters of OCDCA's programs at the Corporation for National Service while Amy Kuhn and Lisa Patt McDaniel of ODOD's Community Development Division and Rita Parise of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency have been supportive of the program as a Special Project within the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

2000-2004:

As OCDCA became more proficient in administering funding and creating IDA programs, it applied for and received its second federal Assets for Independence (AFIA) grant for \$1 million in 2002. From 1996 through 1999, OCDCA promoted asset building through Individual Development Accounts, securing provisions for IDAs in state TANF legislation, a set-aside for IDAs and a private three-site demonstration of IDAs, that led to receipt in 1999 to a 5-year commitment from the Fifth Third Bank Foundation, OCDCA has helped more than 15 programs get started and utilize AFIA funding for their IDA programs: and provided continuing education to more than 30 programs statewide through workshops and the IDA Network.

A total of 164 low-income households have saved an average of \$39 per month towards purchase of a home, business start-up or education. Another 246 households continue to save while receiving financial education and training in their chosen asset goal. In a vote of confidence for this unique model, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee recently committed a total of \$250,000 in matching funds that will allow 83 low-income households to save towards home purchase through an IDA.

From 1993 to 2003, OCDCA was part of a successful statewide movement, led by the Coalition of Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO), to secure a dedicated and permanent funding source for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. OCDCA co-sponsored two Lobby Days with COHHIO to promote the Housing Trust Fund and the housing line items and provided to legislators and members on the importance of the Housing Trust Fund and housing line items, including the CDC Grant Program.

To thank legislators, the Governor and the Administration for securing a permanent and dedicated revenue source for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, OCDCA held a "Thank You Day" luncheon and program at the Statehouse in May 2004 that was attended by approximately 150 legislators and legislative aides, Administration representatives, members and colleagues.

In 2003, recognizing the need for training among experienced CDC affordable housing developers, OCDCA created a new intermediate-level training series for CDC's called "Beyond Basic Skills". The series was well received and has become an important part of OCDCA's menu of training in affordable housing development. With support for HUD, ODOD and other donors, new training programs have been developed for 2004 in the areas of project development, operating standards, asset management, packaging state Housing Development Assistance grants, HOME compliance, and lead-based paint hazards.

Rising interest among its members about technology prompted OCDCA in 2003 to organize a discussion group around the Governor's technology initiative, Third Frontier. The group brainstormed ways that community-based organization, rural communities and small cities could become more involved in this important initiative. The success of these meetings led to presentation of a one-day conference titled, "Community Development, Innovation and Technology" attended by 170 in June 2004.

The conference featured workshops on ways CDCs are promoting technology through community technology centers, small and micro-business incubation, broadband projects, workforce development, the use of new construction techniques and materials for housing development, and in their own organizations. Amy Kuhn, Lisa Patt McDaniel and Pat Valente of ODOD have been supportive of OCDCA's interest in technology and community development and have agreed to continue discussions about how to make state technology and development strategies more inclusive of inner-city neighborhoods and rural communities and the CDCs and local governments active in those communities.

In 2003 the OCDCA published the "Community Development Corporation Production in Ohio" report. This extensive report covered the production of Ohio CDCs in the areas of affordable housing production, commercial and business production, additional CDC services and funding sources. Highlights included the fact that over 15,500 affordable housing units had been produced by Community Development Corporations in Ohio since the mid-1960's, and nearly 10,000 of those housing units were produced between 1995-2000.

Nearly 600,000 square feet of commercial business space had been rehabilitated or built by CDCs in Ohio from 1995-2000. In addition to bricks and mortar production, Ohio's CDCs are actively involved in community organizing, homeownership counseling, public policy and advocacy, community safety and jobs skills training.

Throughout most of 2004, OCDCA has been working closely with Rita Parise and Barry Accountius of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to design an expanded CHDO Operating Support program. Anticipating a continued need for capacity development of CHDOs, this initiative is a proactive step towards continued performance and efficiency of Ohio CHDOs. Training will be conducted by OCDCA in coordination with OHFA in late 2004 for the first funding round.

Ohio CDC Association has held conferences annually since 1984 with the help of our many faithful partners, including the list following this historical overview. Over its 20 years history, Ohio CDC Association has been listening to Community Development Corporations in Ohio and responding with resources to help its members with capacity-building, advocacy and public policy development with the mission of fostering socially and economically healthy communities.

Throughout the years, OCDCA has worked with its members to come closer to the realization of a community development environment that comprehensively improves life opportunities for all residents. We're proud to have been part of the development of Ohio's CDCs, and are looking forward to the next 20 years.