

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

Success Story: Newport, NH Builds a Place for Residents to Gather and Play

\$4,785,000

Grant for LaValley Family
Community Center

30

Years of Development
Before Project Completion

\$78,800

Grants for Fire/EMS
Ambulance & Equipment

\$2,500

Grant for Public Works
Modern Office Equipment

\$227,000

Contributions from the
Town of Newport

6,500

Rural Residents Benefitting
from Various Funding

The Journey Begins with a **COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

The various elements that enable a successful community project are often mere wishes and hopes at the beginning of the initiative's creation story. Some undertakings may have a few ingredients ready to mix in, like a key funder, established facility or favorable lending conditions. Many, though, start like the one in Newport, New Hampshire during the mid-90s, when a few citizens got together and simply had a conversation about a premium community center dedicated to sports, activities and social events. They didn't know what they had to work with, other than a desire to create something special for generations of residents that would improve their health and well-being.

Crucial Giving Creates **MORE INVESTMENT ENERGY**

Fast forward to 2018, when town and project leaders had generated enough momentum behind the community-center idea to issue a request for proposal (RFP) to conduct a feasibility study. This crucial step gives an underserved rural municipality like Newport, with a median home income roughly \$20,000 below the state average, the opportunity to gauge, at limited cost, whether a major project will likely produce economic and social benefits. As the RFP was generating bids, local businesspeople Geraldine and Harold LaValley made a significant donation that anchored the project to a newfound sense of reality—and opened the door for other funders to take interest in it.

USDA Teams Up to Build **HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE**

The audacious community-center project reflected the social cohesion of this scrappy rural town, something familiar to USDA Rural Development (RD) staff. In previous years, RD funded Newport with various smaller grants for its fire and EMS crews, as well as new office equipment for the public works department. A \$4.75 million application to USDA's Community Facilities program, however, was of unprecedented scale and ambition. But with help from congressional partners who earmarked the project for funding, the final piece of the gigantic puzzle fell into place after three decades of trials and tests. For the people of Newport, the time to play had finally come.

For program regulations and requirements, please go to the [USDA RD CF fact sheets](#)

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(Above) The LaValley Family proudly unveils the new community center in Newport, NH, a project three decades in the making that they enabled with a foundational donation; (Below) The new facility stands as a proud reminder of selfless and strong community spirit.

