

# Investments in Rural America: Where are the Foundations?

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## Presenter – David R. Dangler

- Heads up NeighborWorks® America's Rural Initiative. Over 100 of the 230 organizations that comprise the NeighborWorks® network serve rural communities – delivering essential services and investments in homeownership, rental housing, community revitalization, economic development and quality manufactured housing.
- NeighborWorks® organizations are active in 1,268 rural and mixed rural counties in 46 states plus Puerto Rico. Annually these organizations directly invest over \$1.5 billion in their communities through housing and economic development.
- Mr. Dangler is also a founding member of the National Alliance for Rural Policy (NARP) and is a member of the National Rural Housing Coalition's board of directors.

# Presenter – James A. Richardson

- For the last ten years, Jim has served as the founding Executive Director of the National Rural Funders Collaborative, a ten-year initiative collaboration of private foundations to support rural community development initiatives in marginalized, persistently poor areas of the country, especially communities and organizations of color and service low-wealth communities.
- Jim currently lives in Dallas and regular consults throughout the U.S. in areas of community economic development and rural development philanthropy.



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***Working together to promote a vibrant rural America.***

Experience Works · First Nations Development Institute · Housing Assistance Council · Indian Country Conservancy ·  
National Association of Community Health Centers · National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation

National Consumer Law Center · National Trust for Historic Preservation · National Rural Health Association ·  
National Youth Leadership Network · NeighborWorks America · Save the Children · United Farm Workers Foundation

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**A PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVE SUPPORTING  
RURAL COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION**



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## Our Vision

NRFC envisions a transformation of rural regions facing persistent poverty from communities in which historic barriers of race and class reinforce and deepen historic disinvestment and disenfranchisement to more vibrant and inclusive communities in which all who live and work therein can aspire to

- ❖ receive fair wages and benefits for their labor,
- ❖ provide basic necessities and a quality of living for their families and
- ❖ enjoy full rights and privileges of a civil society in which all can lead.



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## **Phase I: 2000 - 2006**

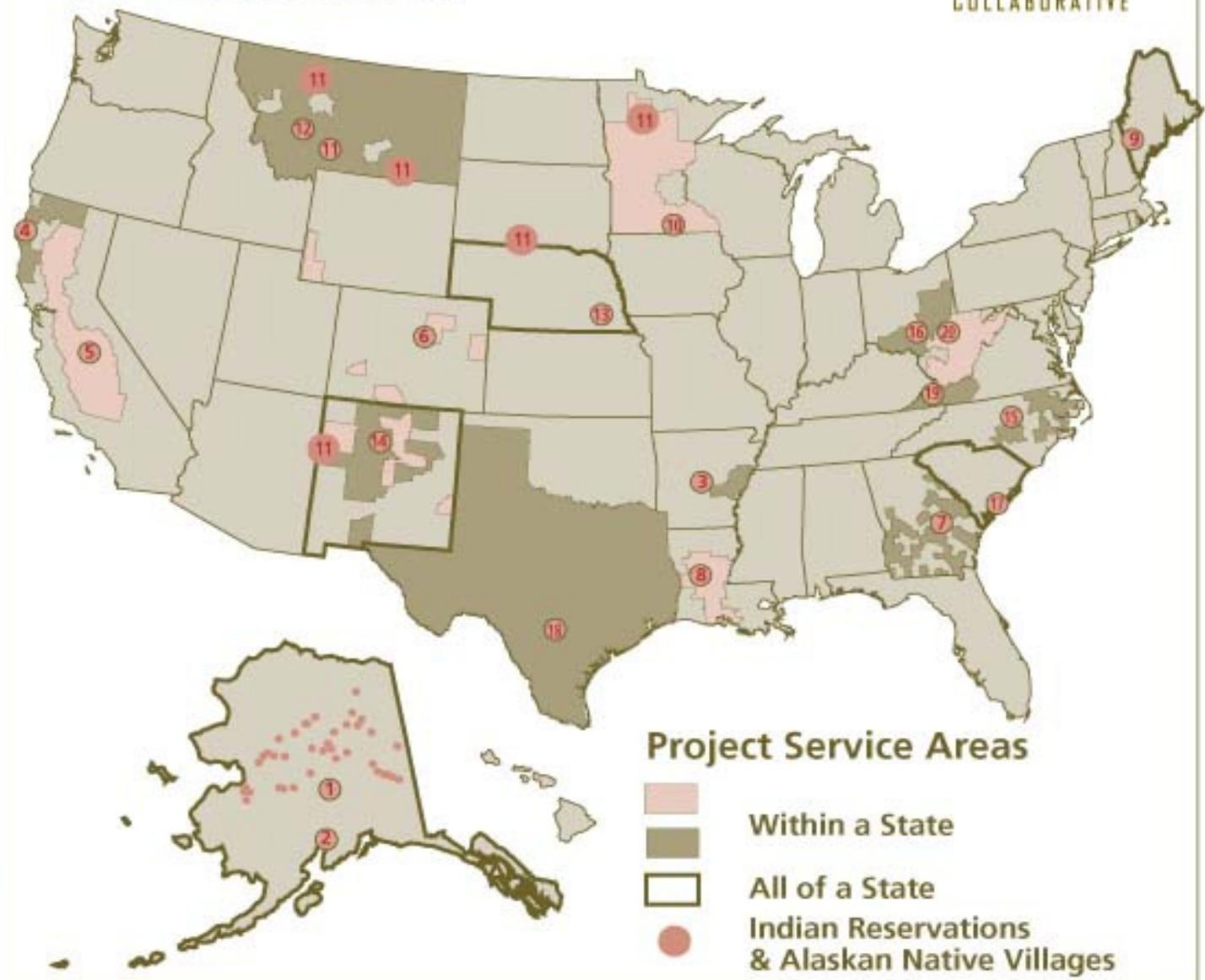
Reversing Persistent Poverty & Transforming Rural  
Communities through:

- ❖ *Build Community Wealth*
- ❖ *Increase Civic Participation/ Inclusive Leadership*
- ❖ *Achieve Greater Family Self-sufficiency*



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# Geography of Concern



## Project Service Areas

-  Within a State
-  All of a State
-  Indian Reservations & Alaskan Native Villages

- Alaska**
- 1 Tanana Chiefs Conference
- 2 Village Based Health Provider Training
- Arkansas**
- 3 Delta Education and Tax Fairness
- California**
- 4 Alliance for Working Community Forests
- 5 Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship
- Colorado**
- 6 Community Alliance for Interdependent Agriculture
- Georgia**
- 7 Fund for Rural Georgia
- Louisiana**
- 8 Building Rural Communities
- Maine**
- 9 W. Maine Sustainable Development
- Minnesota**
- 10 Rural Minnesota Early Childhood
- Montana**
- 11 Four Times Foundation
- 12 Montana Home Ownership Network
- Nebraska**
- 13 Building Philanthropic Support for Rural Entrepreneurship
- New Mexico**
- 14 Rural Livelihoods Collaboration
- North Carolina**
- 15 Resourceful Communities Program
- Ohio**
- 16 Appalachian Ohio Regional Investment Coalition
- South Carolina**
- 17 South Carolina CED Public Policy Collaborative
- Texas - New Mexico**
- 18 Texas/New Mexico Rural Access to Credit
- Virginia**
- 19 Appalachian Sustainable Development/ Com. Foundation of New River Valley
- West Virginia**
- 20 West Virginia Multi-Collaboration



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## *Theory of Change*

Rural Poverty persists due to decades/generations of:

- ❖ *Environmental and economic disinvestment*
- ❖ *Cultural and social Isolation*
- ❖ *Barriers of race and class*



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## *Theory of Change*

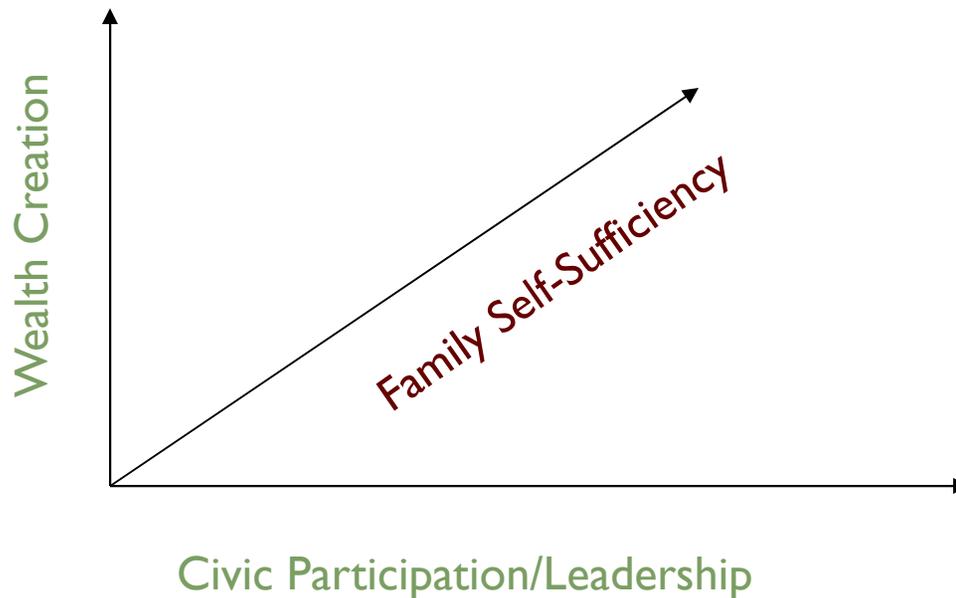
Reversing Persistent Poverty, i.e., Rural Transformation, requires three interrelated outcome strategies for lasting, measurable change:

- ❖ *Build Community Wealth*
- ❖ *Increase Civic Participation/ Inclusive Leadership*
- ❖ *Achieve Greater Family Self-sufficiency*

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**Wealth Creation + Civic Participation =  
Family Self-Sufficiency**





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## Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

### Village Based Health Providers

- *Creating Wealth:* Medicaid Funded Career Ladder to Increase Economic Opportunity
- *Leadership Transformation:* Identification/Training of Village-Based Health Workers
- *Family Self-Sufficiency:* Greater, More Affordable Access to Healthcare & Community Well-being



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## South Carolina Association of Community Development Corps

### Community Development

- *Creating Wealth:* Small Business Development/Affordable Housing through Nurture/Expansion of Community Development Corporations
- *Civic Participation/Leadership:* Grassroots Policy Advocacy & Leadership Development
- *Family Self-Sufficiency:* Increased NP sector jobs & Community-based services



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## Appalachian Ohio Regional Investment Coalition

### Cultural Heritage Tourism/Entrepreneurship

- *Creating Wealth:* Development/Networking of Community Assets —
  - Birding Trails, Heritage Festivals, Crafts
  
- *Civic Participation/Leadership:* Identification/Facilitation of Emerging Entrepreneurs
  
- *Family Self-Sufficiency:* Increased Employment/Stronger Local Economies
  - Livable Wage Jobs, Stronger Support Networks & Services



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## Rural Livelihoods New Mexico Collaborative

Revitalization of Culturally-based Livelihoods

- *Creating Wealth:* Culturally Based Opportunities for Low-wealth Families
- *Civic Participation/Leadership:* Skills Competence Leads to Greater Civic Participation
- *Family Self-Sufficiency:* Revitalized Local Economies through Entrepreneurship



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## **Phase II: 2006 - 2011**

### **Zeroing In:**

- ❖ *On Race, Class & Power — Regions where Race & Poverty are concentrated and overlap*
- ❖ *On Alternative Economies — Regional Economic Strategies built on Community Assets and led by Low-Wealth Leaders, especially of color*



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## *How to Achieve Greater Impact and Leverage: NRFC's Fourfold Theory of Change*

- ❖ Increase family and community self-sufficiency through creating greater opportunity through “alternative rural economies.”
- ❖ Achieve equity in transforming rural communities through “narrowing the gap” in disparities of race, class, and power.
- ❖ Build community investment and self-determination through supporting community-controlled philanthropic models.
- ❖ Effect long-term, lasting change through grassroots advocacy and community-based policy networks.



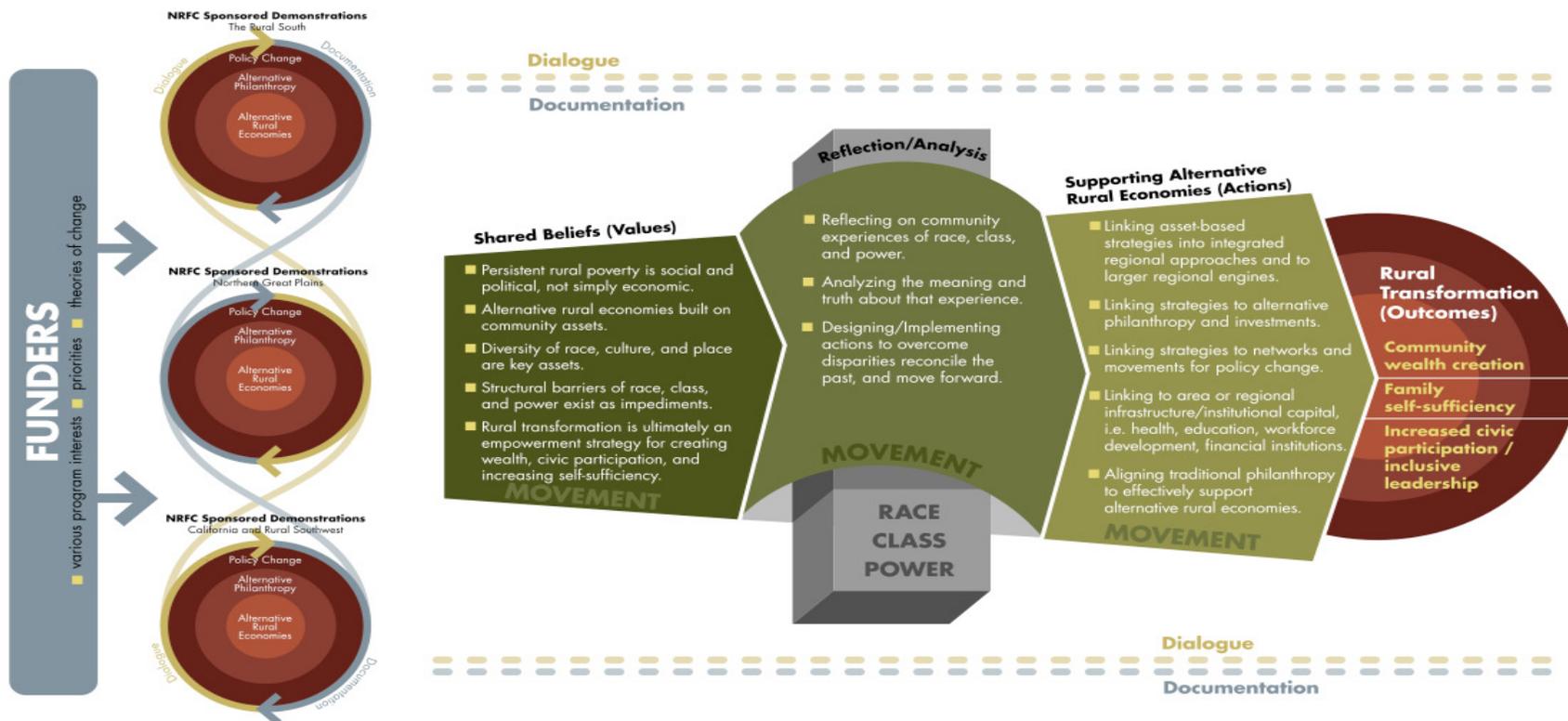
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## Revised Mission Statement

NRFC seeks to build a movement of support and advocacy for alternative rural economies based on community assets of culture, land and human capital and grounded in relationships and values of equity and justice.

# Building a Movement for Rural Transformation







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## Mid South

**market umbrella.org/ Mississippi Association of Coops**

Public market (farmers market) based strategy to develop “Market Shares” variation of giving circles to support stability and innovation of small producers in the market, paired with a focus on strengthening and developing place and number of small, minority farmers (primarily African American) in regional markets.



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## Northern Plains

### **Indian Land Tenure Foundation/Native American CDC**

Strategy for working with landed Indian tribes in Montana and N. Dakota to translate cultural understanding of tribal sovereignty to “economic sovereignty” as approach for building on land and cultural assets of Native American community to devise sustainable strategies for rural transformation and new vision of regional competitive advantage.



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## California/West

### **Salinas & Pajaro Valley Collaborative/ Rai\$ing Change**

A multi-faceted regional approach to restructure the local Ag-based economy through creating asset-building, entrepreneurial small-business and small-farm opportunities for Latino farmworkers in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys in northern Monterey County and through increasing opportunities for civic participation and business development among non-Spanish speaking indigenous (i.e., Oaxacan) residents in southern Monterey County.



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**Lessons Learned  
&  
Legacies for Future  
Collaboration**



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## Strengthening Practice through Performance

- ✓ Build Collaborative Capital for Working Together
- ✓ Fund “Strategic Opportunities” for Regional Change
- ✓ Define Outcome Targets/ Milestones for Success
- ✓ Document Best Practices & Peer Learning



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## Expanding Philanthropy & Investment

- ✓ Find Alternative Models for Regional Philanthropy & Investment
- ✓ Foster Engaged Funder-Practitioner Partnerships
- ✓ Form Public - Private Partnerships for Greater Leverage
- ✓ Convene National & Regional Funders to Work Together



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## Advancing Policy at the Grassroots & in the Treetops

- ✓ Build Local & Regional Capacity for Policy Framing
- ✓ Foster Regional Networks for Greater Influence
- ✓ Connect Public Agencies to Regional Initiatives
- ✓ Build National Agenda for Regional Responsiveness



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**An Unfinished  
Agenda**

**&**

**Future Funding  
Opportunities**



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## The Unfinished Agenda: Reframing the Rural Value Proposition

- ✓ Original Framing = Fairness, i.e., Rural Communities & Regions not getting their “fair share” of funding
- ✓ Current Framing w/i Philanthropy = Impact with a bias toward urban where greater number can be reached through strategies in concentrated geographies
- ✓ Implications for Reframing Rural Funding = Interdependency of rural and urban within Regions of Influence



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## Future Funding Opportunities: Identifying Critical “Regions of Influence” that cut across Urban and Rural Landscapes

- ✓ **Educational Attainment** = Community Colleges as primary vehicle for building a competitive workforce and an engaged post-secondary population
- ✓ **Food Security** = Intersection of Grow Local, Buy Local with healthier communities
- ✓ **Civic Participation/Citizenship** = Increasing the Diversity of Leadership within our communities and regions (immigration)



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## Future Funding Strategies:

Developing Regional Partnerships that combine  
“Regions of Interest” with “Regions of Influence”

- ✓ **Geographically-related Funders** = primarily Community Foundations and Family Foundations with concentrated urban/rural serving areas
- ✓ **Affinity Groups** = associations of funders and other organizations with shared interests and complimentary areas of influence
- ✓ **Leveraging Area Resources** = venture/leadership from area funders, infrastructure/programmatic direction from nonprofits, technical/strategic support from public sector



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## Future Funding Strategies: Roles & Relationships

- ✓ **Practice** = nonprofit community must identify the compelling strategies and models to capture and join “regions of influence” with “regions of interest”
- ✓ **Philanthropy** = area funders must be challenged and incentivized to provide seed, strategic and sustaining capital
- ✓ **Policy** = governmental and jurisdictional agencies must be encouraged to find creative, administrative ways of overcoming barriers and multiplying/accelerating results