

## **Final Report to USDA Rural Development 2015-2016 Cooperative Child Care Project**

**Purpose:** Establish Cooperative Business Owned Childcare in two North Dakota cities, Hettinger and Rolette

**Approach:** This project worked to create cooperative childcare with the lead planner of the California Center for Cooperative Development, a national leader in cooperative child care facilities located in Davis, California. Facilitation was also complimented by the NDAREC Rural Electric & Telecommunications Center in Mandan. Each community had a local community facilitator.

Each community was given research on their community and the data available about the need for a child care. This information was publicized in each community. A local working group of businesses and individuals was formed to work on the cooperative in their community. Possible sites were vetted and considered by each working group along with business planning including financials.

### **City of Hettinger:**

A private provider opened a facility in Hettinger for up to 30 children in the spring of 2015 shortly after we began work in Hettinger. We do believe the publicity and research from our project was a factor in the opening of this facility. This facility had 20 children in the fall of 2015 and can increase to 30 children if needed. There were two other openings in the community making the total available child care 12 slots. The project team was seeing a lack of community support already at the June 2015 steering committee meeting with only two members attending. However, the Project Team wanted to monitor this situation for a period of time to be sure the business was sound and staying in the community.

In September 2015, it was decided to no longer pursue a cooperative child care in Hettinger. Our city facilitator in the project spoke to steering committee members prior to this decision and they confirmed the urgency for the project is gone from the community. The need for weekend and night child care was determined to be beyond this project as those are extremely difficult to cash flow and staff. A letter about this decision to discontinue the project in Hettinger was sent in October 2015 to all steering committee members and other persons and businesses in the community that had participated.

### **City of Rolette:**

After a great effort to locate a child care facility in the city of Rolette and to get business and local commitment, it was realized that the project wasn't going to move forward within the confines of this project's timeline. Since there was considerable interest in what we were doing from other communities, a request to extend the project and change the city location was made. However, it was decided that other communities would need to apply for funds themselves in separate grants rather than extend this grant to another city.

In retrospect, there are several important accomplishments from this grant application. Those are as follows:

1. There is a need to provide local data in the local newspapers on the need for child care in rural counties – In Adams County this resulted in the nearly immediate opening of a private childcare in the city of Hettinger for 30 children.
2. Extremely small communities like Rolette may have too small a business base and employee base to support a cooperative childcare. Though we didn't track this, it appeared many people worked outside the community and were able to find child care in those communities. Other small businesses had few employees and weren't affected to a great degree. The school and the nursing home were affected by the lack of childcare. In the end, the nursing home chose to open its own childcare to service the needs of its employees though it was unclear whether this would be open to the public.
3. More should have been done prior to grant writing to assess local support and to get local direction. Though the people of Rolette need child care options there appeared to be a reluctance to get on board with the project. We did provide information by newspaper and visited each local employer and had community meetings. However, once a cooperative child care at the nursing home was shown to be unfeasible, the lead businesses and the nursing home seemed to move away from the project and the base support quickly softened. We did have a solid group of interested individuals and parents but were unable to get city council support and match funding when needed.
4. The project did provide an important element to further cooperative child care in North Dakota. The NDAREC Rural Electric & Telecommunications Center played a facilitator/assist role in the project. They were able to work and learn from the California Center for Cooperatives, a premier collaborator for cooperative childcare in the nation. From this experience, they are moving forward under a local invitation for a cooperative childcare in the Beulah/Hazen area. The staff learned so much from their experiences in this project; it gives them the ability and confidence to move forward in other communities. It is likely cooperative childcares will be an important part of their work and service in rural North Dakota.
5. The project saw excellent cooperation with Child Care Aware and the county licensors in the work teams. This leads us to believe other efforts will be strongly supported as well.
6. In the end, both the city of Hettinger and the city of Rolette have a new child care facility. Though not the cooperative child care this project had envisioned, each community got a childcare and learned how difficult it is to cash flow these facilities. Also, in Rolette, the Rural Electric and Telecommunications Center did assist the nursing home with a successful \$30,000 grant for playground equipment.
7. Again, the work of the staff at the NDAREC Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center has been important to this project and they continue to work to move a similar project forward.

The Project Budget is found on the next page.

**RBEG PROJECT BUDGET  
REPORT**

**USDA RD Cooperative Child Care**

**PROJECT:** 2014 RBEG  
**DATE:** 1.1.2015 to 3.30.2016

<b>Revised Budget Requested</b>				
	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>03/03/16 Revised Budget</b>	<b>Total Earned to Date</b>	<b>Balance to De-obligate</b>
<b>Administrative &amp; Travel \$12,000</b>	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 11,258.58	\$ 741.42
<b>Contractual</b>	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 43,250.00	\$ 4,750.00
Contingency				\$ -
<b>Total</b>	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 54,508.58	\$ 5,491.42
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>				
<b>Rural Development Loan</b>	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 54,508.58	\$ 5,491.42
<b>State</b>				\$ -
<b>Other -NDAREC RTC staff time donated</b>	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 24,888.85	\$ -