

CASE STUDY: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR UNITED WAY OF SOUTH MISSISSIPPI - REBUILDING SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI POST-HURRICANE KATRINA

BACKGROUND

A volunteer Strategic Planning Alliance, chaired by Aletha Burge, scheduled two Strategic Community Build sessions to discuss key strategic questions before the United Way of South Mississippi related its mission to create sustainable community change. This alliance addressed both how the change is implemented and the role of the alliance in achieving this mission in communities throughout southern Mississippi.

CHALLENGE

The objectives of the sessions outlined by the sponsor and consultative facilitator included the following:

- Define the vision of the volunteer alliance as it relates to initiatives designed to address the current and ongoing need for affordable housing in southern Mississippi, which has reached a crisis level due to the destruction caused by the series of hurricanes that swept through the area.
- Establish the strategic elements of a sound Theory of Change around that vision
- Create action plans that will outline the tactical elements of the Theory of Change



Tierah Chorba, a Leadership Strategies core facilitator, served as a facilitator and documenter for the sessions.

SOLUTION

The initial session focused on the creation of a vision and a supporting strategic outline for accomplishing the vision that would receive the support of all of the alliance members and accolades from the grant provider and other potential funding entities. The participants were presented the three core Elements of Success as put forward by the sponsoring entity and major funder, the United Way – community, impact and sustainability.

Tierah facilitated the group through a brainstorming exercise with the purpose of creating a shared working understanding of the elements required. The exercise was designed to broaden the participants' view beyond the specific issue of "housing" in order to explore the concepts without limitation. The abstract ideas were then condensed into working definitions for each core concept.

Each of the strategic planning steps were explored and processed through a series of similar facilitated brainstorming sessions. The outcome of all the work undertaken throughout the session was the decision to move forward with the goal of meeting the most immediate needs - showing a "big win" and addressing the ongoing need to create sustainable affordable housing. The result was the three-phased plan below created to do just this:

PHASE 1- Pilot Program (Change the image of the Mississippi Cottage.)

PHASE 2- Master Plan (Rebuild south Mississippi communities better than before for a sustainable

source of affordable housing that is appealing to the community and its residents.)

PHASE 3- Senior Housing Community (Meet the immediate needs of the senior community with potential to reach the remaining target population.)



In mid-august, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Housing Alliance broke ground on the construction of two Coastal Cottages located in Diamondhead, Mississippi.

to the International Building Code (IBC) and are built to withstand winds of up to 150 miles per hour.

On August 28, 2008 - the third anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, an open house was held for the first home constructed. Mississippi Governor, Haley Barbour, spoke in support of the Mississippi "Katrina" Cottage for permanent housing.

RESULTS

PHASE 1 COMPLETE!

In mid-August, The Mississippi Gulf Coast Housing Alliance broke ground on the construction of two Coastal Cottages located in Diamondhead, Mississippi. The homes are an innovative modular design that combines the two-bedroom Mississippi Cottage provided by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency with a modular addition. The houses serve as a model application for the more than 3,000 Mississippi Cottages that exist in the state of Mississippi.

The houses were designed in cooperation with FEMA Long Term Recovery and constructed under the supervision of Bay-Waveland Area Habitat for Humanity with funds provided by United Way of South Mississippi, Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation. They are among of the first structures built in the Gulf Coast to satisfy the stringent construction standards of the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation's Builder and Developer Guild. The Guild has developed some of the highest standards for community redevelopment in the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The homes also conform



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