



# PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

For 35 years, the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has worked to build the capacity of rural organizations that strive to create or sustain affordable housing. This effort has depended on hundreds of partnerships with local organizations that have received one-on-one technical assistance, attended regional and national training events, or accessed grants, loans, or information from HAC. In working with local communities, HAC has adopted certain principles of partnership that have been central to our collaborative efforts.

## HAC believes:

1. **Housing conditions for the poorest of the poor in rural areas can be improved.** HAC's mission guides its overall philosophy and its everyday activities. By remaining focused on the key components of the mission – rural, housing, and the poorest of the poor – HAC has been able to foster the partnerships needed to make a difference in rural communities across the country.
2. **All development is local.** HAC's partnerships are defined by local needs. When rural stakeholders require assistance, guidance, and resources to create affordable housing solutions, HAC engages in a way that respects local processes, needs, and context.
3. **Every partnership has value and should be nurtured.** Support existing organizations or help to create capacity where none exists. HAC has worked with local governments, nonprofit organizations, for-profit corporations, and tribes – anyone who is committed to building affordable rural housing. HAC's open door policy has led it to collaborate with high end producers as well as fledgling organizations working in remote rural and difficult to serve areas. By valuing the potential of each partner, our combined efforts can produce results.
4. **Unique needs shape customized assistance.** Develop capacity building strategies based on the specific needs of rural developers. HAC's programs are designed to address the unique issues that affect rural communities. HAC's national perspective provides a general framework to design assistance programs; however, the interaction with local communities dictates the implementation of these programs.
5. **There are no shortcuts to sustainable growth.** Change is a process. It may take many years or a series of interventions, but the ultimate goal of affordable housing development can be achieved. Some of HAC's partnerships have lasted since the 1970s. As these organizations have grown, the partnerships have evolved. While innovative strategies are often sought after and used, there is always an underlying commitment to rural communities of need that drives our ongoing efforts.
6. **Effective development requires collaborative solutions.** Community development is complex work that requires bringing collective strengths to the needs of rural communities. HAC is committed to working with as many partners as needed and uses multi-dimensional tools to support local efforts. HAC's information provision, technical assistance, training, and lending are used individually and jointly to support these efforts.
7. **Local voices can create systemic change.** The experiences of rural organizations should be reflected in the larger community development arena. It is HAC's responsibility to connect its perspective, networks, and expertise to the articulated needs of rural communities. By having ongoing dialogue with local communities, expressing and advancing rural interests on the national level, and helping to create policy and programmatic responses that are sensitive to the rural context, HAC has been able to institutionalize needed change.
8. **Never underestimate the impact of a small action.** A small capacity building grant, a short telephone call to share technical advice, or an online resource can mean the difference between success and failure. Targeted support can have a dramatic ripple effect that can help groups leverage additional resources, leading to future success.

HAC's foundation is its commitment to the groups it serves and the results our collective efforts produce for rural residents. In celebrating its 35th anniversary, HAC honors the partnerships that have made this work so rewarding and so greatly benefited the communities we are all committed to serve. 