

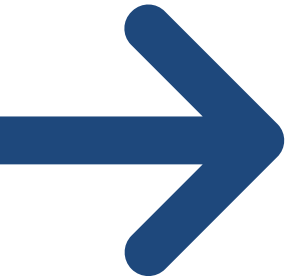


# Investing in Rural Prosperity:

A Forum on Braiding and Blending  
Federal and Private Funds

## Welcome

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024  
9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.



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# The “TRIC” to Fostering Shared Economic Prosperity in Rural America

- Rural communities are more likely to achieve broad-based economic prosperity if they take an asset-based, equitable approach to development
- The “TRIC” approach to rural development includes tailoring the approach to the community, designing it be resilient and being inclusive and collaborative.



# Speakers



**Daniel Paul Davis**  
Federal Reserve Bank  
of St. Louis



**Hunter Goodman**  
University of Arkansas  
Cooperative Extension Service



**Martha Claire Bullen**  
Communities Unlimited



**Michael Rivera**  
Communities Unlimited



**Tineciaa Harris**  
Delta Regional Authority



**Christel Taylor**  
Newport Economic  
Development Council



**Darryl Treat**  
Searcy County Chamber of  
Commerce

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a large white water tower stands on a metal lattice structure, with the word "LEWISVILLE" painted in blue on its side. The tower is surrounded by dense green trees. In the background, a dirt road winds through a green field, flanked by more trees, some of which are in bloom with light pink flowers. The sky is not visible, suggesting a high-angle shot.

# Invest in Rural: Approaches to Braided and Blended Funding for the Future

**COMMUNITIES**  
Unlimited



Who is in the room?

Why are we here?





# COMMUNITIES Unlimited

## A Quick Overview





Community Sustainability

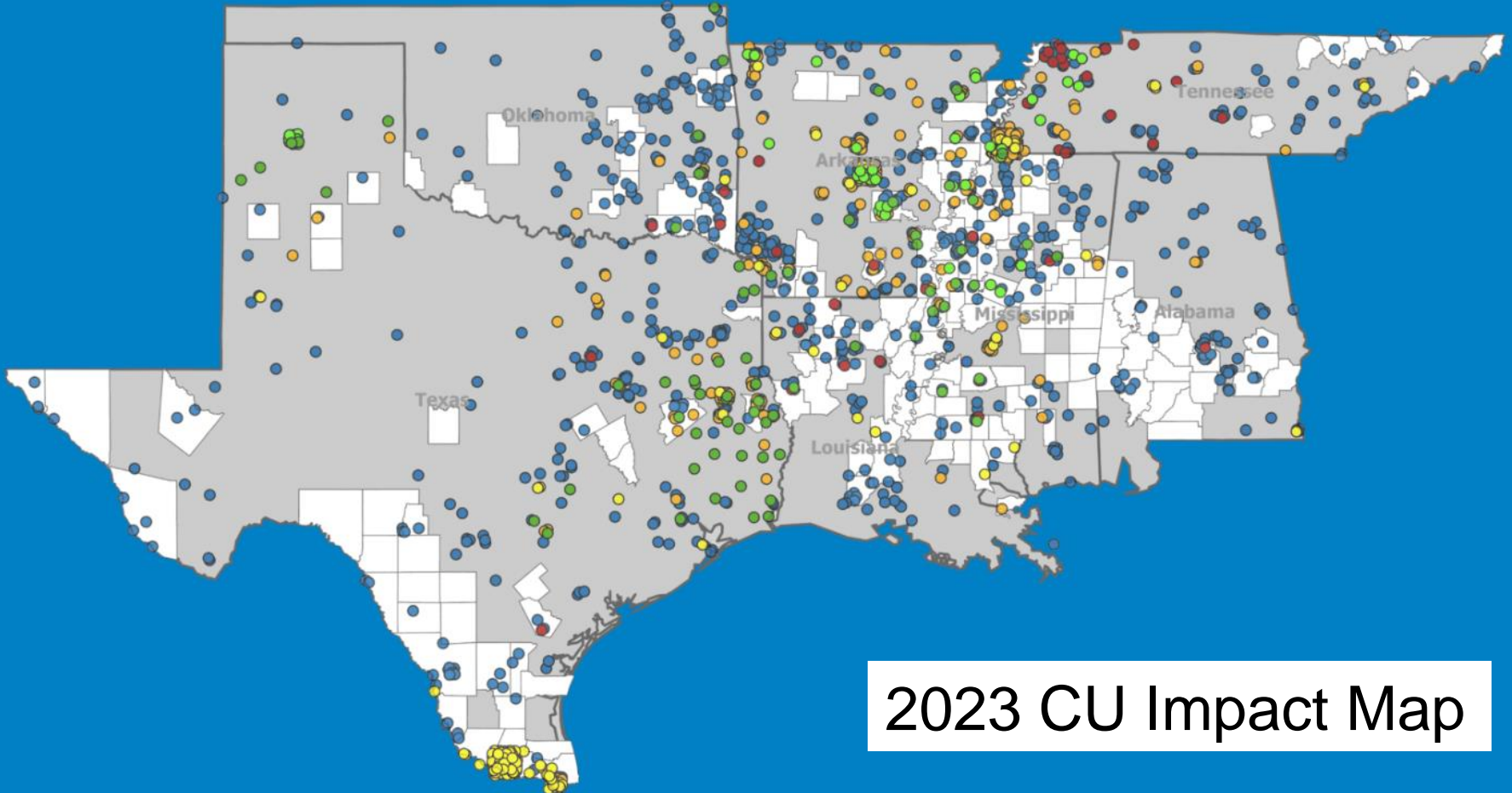
Environmental Services

GIS Mapping

Healthy Foods

Entrepreneurship

Lending



2023 CU Impact Map

# CU Capacity Building



**Community Sustainability – building community leadership**



**Environmental Services – Rural water/wastewater systems**



**Small Business – intensive consulting, support for contracting**



**Healthy Foods – connecting small farmers with food deserts**



**Broadband – building relationships between ISPs and leaders**



**Rural Housing – building modular homes in Pine Bluff for the Delta**



**GIS Mapping – mapping W/WW systems, disaster preparedness**

**All programs supported with capital solutions!**



GROWING TOGETHER

# 2023 Impact

We are a rural development hub working holistically with rural leaders, creating positive change in communities. Our technical assistance and lending impact rural and urban communities throughout our seven-state footprint. Here are the numbers to prove it.

**762**

Rural Communities  
Served

**174,904,879**

\$ Leveraged

**1341**

Jobs Created &  
Sustained

**1,061,128**

People Served

**7,163,141**

\$ Lent

**344**

Businesses Served

# Community Sustainability

The team works to invest in local communities championing their own lasting change, engaging diverse community stakeholders to elevate their voices on the strategies and opportunities necessary for them to thrive. This only happens through deep, local relationship building and a commitment to long term partnerships to connect to resources and offer technical assistance.



# Lending

Communities Unlimited is a U.S. Treasury-certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). We expand economic opportunities for underserved people and communities by providing access to the capital they need to prosper. We offer a variety of lending opportunities for small businesses, water/wastewater needs, and housing.



Communities Unlimited makes loans to small businesses to position them for profitable growth leading to new jobs and local economic development. With loans of \$1000 to \$200,000, we fill gaps in small business financing. Below is additional information about how you can connect with our lending staff to inquire about a small business loan.

# Let's Talk Capital Stacks!

Standard Concept of Capital Stack – New Market Tax Credit Program Model

CU's Version of Capital Stacking

- Ex. Cherokee County Rural Water District #12
  - combined with Cherokee County reserve funds and CU loan of \$190k. CU leveraged \$185k.

Our Capital Stack model works by having the technical assistance providers on the ground identifying opportunities to leverage ALL federal and state dollars

# CONNECT

## Relationship Building

- Community Champions
- Agencies
- Funders





# Leading in Twin Groves, AR

- Leadership team developed capital fundraising plan
- Secured funding:
  - Federal \$50,000
  - Philanthropic \$75,000
  - Private Donations \$20,000
- Engaged engineer and architect to develop site plan and complete site surveys



# ASSIST

## Funding Plans

- Who is funding this work already?
- Is the community/organization application ready?
- Grant writing assistance

## PREDEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING LOAN

# Securing Resources

- 2022, CU received a Program Related Investment (PRI) from RWJ
- Designed a unique loan portfolio that provides interim financing to rural communities to access the State Revolving Funds or USDA fund
- Access to these funds may take up to 2 years
- Tucker, AR, the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission required requirements for system
- CU made a loan for \$951k to the system. This water association was able to secure a over \$1mm in grants to pay off the debt and leveraged \$7.5mm in SRF funding for infrastructure improvements.

**Let's talk about Community Champions?  
Who are a few that come to mind?**



**LEAD**

# Toward Inclusive Opportunities

- Community conversations toward innovative solutions
- Lean into learning

# Filling the GAPS with Innovation

**CU fills GAPS with Innovative Products** – having TA in ground allows us to have a better understanding of challenges our communities face when applying for federal or state funds. As most of us are aware, there are hundreds of programs out there geared towards addressing rural deficiencies. We are also aware, that prior to being able to access these funds, the communities, business, or individuals are required to comply with pre-requisites like matching funds, preliminary engineering reports, statements of financial position or legal counsel.

# CU SOLUTIONS

- **Farm Bridge Loans** – USDA Regional Food Business Centers Program/ Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program – 9 to 12 months – Sachs Family Foundation PRI
- **Community Facilities Loan** – Community gardens, food pantries, fire trucks, townhalls, courthouses, health care facilities... Grant, Fed Funds and CU funds
- **Housing** – CDFI Funds, HUD Grant \$7mm over 6 years leveraging come home – King Foundation – Fortified Roof – FHLB of Dallas, Simmons Bank

# Call to Action:

- ✓ Connect – with others to address common needs
- ✓ Assist – you are a piece of the solution
- ✓ Lead – lead conversations that are inclusive and inviting to all



# Audience Q&A Session



Martha Claire Bullen  
Communities Unlimited



Michael Rivera  
Communities Unlimited

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870-403-3285

In the event things go south . . . This picture is sure to bring smiles! 😊



# Speakers



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Thank you for your participation today.

Please scan and offer feedback about today's event.



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