

MONTANA ROC NEWSLETTER



SPRING INTO ACTION!

With the snow melting and the sun shining, it's a great time for spring cleaning! Many ROCs in Montana are partnering with NWMT technical assistance staff and property managers to host community clean-up events. These may include dumpster rentals, volunteer waste pickup, or other projects.

Make it fun with a community potluck! Board members interested in organizing an event should reach out to their TA for assistance.

See page 2 for TA contact information



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BETTER TOGETHER GRANT NEWS

Each year, ROC USA allocates funds - typically around \$20,000 - for the Better Together grant program, allowing ROC Association Directors to distribute individual grants of up to \$2,000 to ROC communities.

Generally, there are no strict funding categories, meaning a variety of projects, such as construction or repairs, rebranding and marketing efforts, or initiatives to enhance community engagement, can qualify. All ROCs are encouraged to apply.

PLEASE NOTE: Recipients of grants from the previous year are not eligible for the current year's funding.

rocusa.org/grants/the-better-together-grant-program

IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE

May 4 - applications are due

May 23 - winners notified

December 31 - projects must be completed and photos provided to ROC USA

Community TAs

RACHEL CLARNO

Country Court
Green Acres
Hideaway Community
Libby Creek
Morning Star
Northwood

MAGGIE HODGES

Clear Creek
Crossroads Cooperative
Pleasant Park

REBECCA HEEMSTRA

C & C Community
Centennial Trail
Golden Age Village
Mountain Springs Villa
Sleeping Giant
Stan's Garden
View Vista

MOLLY KIRKHAM

Bonnie's Place
Buena Vista
Old Hellgate Village
River Acres
Two Rivers

General TA Roles

Post-Purchase: support with developing budgets and capital improvement plans and help with policies and procedures

Training: education and training for members and leadership

Compliance: assistance with loan compliance, grant covenants, and terms as applicable

Connections: access to other residents of ROCs in Montana

IN 2024, THREE MONTANA ROCS WERE AWARDED BETTER TOGETHER GRANTS.

These funds can be utilized for various projects and ideas. We see marketing, safety, and member engagement in these!



Golden Age Village in Emigrant used the grant toward purchase and installment of a playground in their community. What a fun addition to their park!

Sleeping Giant in Livingston had a new community sign designed and installed with their grant funds received. You can tell they have pride in their community!

Country Court in Kalispell utilized the grant funds to support project costs for a bus shelter to be installed. What a great way to keep kids safe and comfortable in the winter months!



For additional information and to apply for the 2025 Better Together Grant, scan the QR code to the left with your phone or visit: rocusa.org/grants/the-better-together-grant-program



MONTANA ROC DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAININGS

NeighborWorks Montana is hosting special disaster preparedness trainings designed exclusively for residents of Resident Owned Communities (ROCs) in Montana! This is an incredible opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and tools to protect your family and your community.

About the Presenter



We are excited to welcome nationally recognized trainer Laura Royer from the Royer Consultancy. Laura is an expert trainer, financial coach, and business consultant with extensive experience in disaster preparedness. She has designed this training specifically for ROC residents and will be leading the session.

WHAT WE WILL LEARN:

Practical steps your household can take to prepare for a disaster

How to develop a community-wide plan for your ROC

Strategies to strengthen your community's resilience

DON'T MISS THIS IMPORTANT TRAINING! BE PREPARED, STAY INFORMED, AND STRENGTHEN YOUR ROC. DINNER IS INCLUDED.

RSVP to your TA by APRIL 28TH TO ATTEND!

Kalispell Area: Mon, May 5 | Hampton Inn | 5:30PM - 8:30PM

Missoula Area: Tue, May 6 | Confluence Center | 5:30PM - 8:30PM

Great Falls Area: Wed, May 7 | Keller Williams Realty | 5:30PM - 8:30PM

Livingston Area: Thur, May 8 | City/County Complex | 5:30PM - 8:30PM

Good Neighbor Tips!

-  **Maintain your home & yard**
Keep exteriors clean, lawns tidy, and follow community guidelines.
-  **Be respectful with noise**
Keep volume reasonable and limit loud work early or late.
-  **Follow parking & traffic rules**
Park properly, follow speed limits, and respect visitor spaces.
-  **Pet etiquette**
Leash pets, clean up after them, and prevent excessive noise or wandering.
-  **Waste management**
Use proper bins, dispose of waste correctly, and keep the area clean.
-  **Communication & conflict**
Be friendly, address concerns politely, and involve management if needed.
-  **Participate in community life**
Attend meetings, support events, and welcome new neighbors.

Manufactured home communities thrive on camaraderie and shared responsibility. These tips can help you be a considerate neighbor and create a welcoming, harmonious environment. Thank you for being a good neighbor!

EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!

Mary O'Hara, Executive Vice President of ROC USA, reminds us below that being a good neighbor and following the community rules is the responsibility of everyone!

"It's actually a win-win when a board member gets a rules violation notice! It shows that no one is exempt from the community rules, that the property manager is enforcing the rules fairly, and the board demonstrates in a really clear way that directors are just like everyone else," explains Mary.

"I remember when one ROC board finally voted to approve a very controversial parking policy. It included towing if a member-owner got two violations. It was a very tight community, so parking spaces were important," told Mary. "The vice president of the board was the first person to get her car towed! She was furious! But, she admitted, it was fair. After that, if anyone complained about 'why me?!' when they got a rule violation, she would say, 'Because we ALL have to follow the rules. Did I tell you about the time my car got towed due to a rule violation?'"

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Cindy's connection to Old Hellgate Village (OHV) runs deep. Not only did she grow up there, but her family built the park, spearheaded by her aunt who played a pivotal role in its creation and operation for many years. When her father passed away, he made sure his home in the park went to Cindy, knowing that she would find security there, especially given her ongoing health challenges due to a genetic disease. With never-ending medical expenses, inheriting the home provided Cindy with the stability she needed.

But Cindy's story extends far beyond her own circumstances. She has dedicated her life to helping others by opening her home to women and children in need within her recovery network. Over the years, she has fostered and cared for numerous women and children, even adopting the son of one of the women she sheltered. Her generosity has created a haven for those in crisis, embodying the very essence of community.

The land that became OHV holds a dramatic and complex history. Cindy's aunt and her husband originally lived on the homestead when a tragic accident changed everything - her husband died unexpectedly leaving her with a large piece of land and an unfinished home. The family came together to complete her aunt's home, and eventually, they decided to transform the land into a trailer park.



Cindy's dad, uncles, brother, and son in the park

At a time when women couldn't obtain loans, all ownership remained under her late husband's name. The park was sold a few times before ultimately becoming a resident owned community (ROC).

For Cindy, the transition to a ROC has been a powerful and meaningful shift. "It's so cool to be a part owner in a park that was started by my family," she shares. Beyond the financial benefits, ROC homeownership has created a true sense of belonging. "People come together in times of crisis and tragedy, and it is truly a community," she explains. "There's more community in a mobile home park than anywhere else. Maybe it's because we're so close together, so you better get along!"

Cindy has passionately advocated on behalf of manufactured home parks for quite some time. In the 1990s, she served as a board member for Montana People's Action, fighting for the rights of residents like herself. Today, she continues to champion the benefits of ROCs, showing that cooperative ownership can preserve affordability while fostering a strong community. At OHV, Cindy has found not just a house, but a home and a community that reflects her own generous spirit.

MONTANA LEGISLATIVE NEWS

The Montana Legislature started the 2025 session in January and is expected to end in early May. Below are a few bills related to affordable housing that NWMT has been tracking:

HB 154: Housing Fairness Tax Credit – would provide a refundable tax credit for eligible homeowners and renters based on property taxes or rent-equivalent taxes paid. *Status: Passed the House, tabled in Senate Taxation committee*

HB 277: Minimum Lease Term for Mobile Home Lots – would require mobile home lot leases to be at least two years unless waived by the tenant, with 180 days notice for termination. *Status: Tabled in House Judiciary, not going to advance.*

HB 305: Mobile Home Park Dispute Resolution Program – would establish a process for resolving disputes between landlords and tenants, with a 120-day notice requirement before park sales. *Status: Tabled in House Judiciary, not going to advance.*

SB405: Funding for the Housing Montana Fund – would allocate \$50 million from the state general fund for loans to a wide range of housing projects which could include resident-owned community conversions. *Status: Passed the Senate, referred to House Business and Labor Committee.*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MOBILE HOME PARK CLOSES?

The Fall 2024 edition of the ROC Newsletter included an update about the evicted residents of Spring Creek Park in Kalispell and the effort by members of the community to assist them with relocation.

As of April 2025, NeighborWorks Montana, with fundraising assistance from the Whitefish Community Foundation, has helped distribute \$140,000 of donated assistance to 26 out of 27 of those evicted households. Looking back at where those families are now, the evidence is clear - financial assistance keeps evicted families secure housing and avoid homelessness.

In follow-up surveys with those families, 18 out of 19 respondents said that they were scared of becoming homeless after being evicted from Spring Creek Park. Four of those respondents said they would have become homeless without financial assistance. Although some families remain in precarious housing situations, none of them have had to sleep on the street, in a vehicle, or in a shelter.

A 2017 study by the National Alliance to End Homelessness found that a chronically homeless person costs taxpayers an average of \$35,578 per year. The \$5,000 in assistance provided to Spring Creek Park families was not only the right thing to do, it was the financially responsible thing to do!

Montana Resident Owned Community News

IN THIS EDITION:

- Disaster preparedness events
- Tips for being a good neighbor
- Updates on legislative bills
- Better Together grant info
- Update on Spring Creek Park
- And more!

FREE ONLINE TRAINING AVAILABLE!

