

Focus Areas

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Housing Sustainability

TA CONSULTANTS:

Housing Sustainability Advisors (HSA)

PROGRAM PERIOD:

February 22, 2024
—February 28, 2025



Total Concept

FOWLER, CO / TOTALCONCEPT.NET

Empowering Rural Communities Through: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Background

Based in Fowler, Colorado, Total Concept worked to develop a long-term business model integrating energy efficiency and solar power into its housing and community development initiatives. With a goal of applying this model to all its existing and future housing developments, the organization used the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) support to assess the feasibility of renewable energy integration, explore partnerships and lay the groundwork for expanded energy generation and sustainability efforts across rural Colorado.

The Challenge

To implement a sustainable energy model across its housing portfolio, Total Concept needed to better understand the feasibility of integrating solar energy and energy efficiency upgrades into both new construction and rehabilitation projects. The organization also faced the challenge of identifying appropriate funding streams, navigating regulatory requirements and building partnerships to support long-term implementation.

“Kudos to whoever designed this RCDI program... It was probably the best-designed TA process and feedback and data gathering I’ve seen.”

— STEVE CORDOVA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, *Total Concept*

With support from the RCDI program, Total Concept focused on three primary goals:

1. Identify and maintain momentum on solar and energy-related projects by developing a clear strategy for evaluating and advancing projects.
2. Develop a “run book” or internal project pipeline that could guide future implementation and support the creation of public-facing energy services.
3. Apply for relevant funding opportunities, including HUD’s Green and Resilient Retrofit Program (GRRP) and other programs aligned with energy efficiency and renewable energy goals.

RCDI Support & Technical Assistance

With support from Housing Sustainability Advisors (HSA), Total Concept received tailored technical assistance to advance its energy-focused initiatives. Consultants played a key role in helping the organization complete solar feasibility studies for multiple properties, equipping the team with essential data to evaluate potential projects. HSA also supported the organization in applying for a contract with Energy Outreach Colorado (EOC), which is expected to provide funding for community outreach and energy education across Total Concept's service area.

Additionally, the consultants offered guidance throughout the process of applying for HUD's Green and Resilient Retrofit Program (GRRP), assisting with setup, application navigation and submission. As a result of this work, Total Concept established relationships with EOC and other energy partners, identified three priority projects for further development and began drafting a business plan for a new line of energy-related services.

Key Achievements

- Completed solar feasibility studies to assess renewable energy potential across multiple properties.
- Applied for a contract with Energy Outreach Colorado to expand energy education and community engagement.
- Collaborated with state agencies to increase access to renewable energy financing for rural households.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

- 1 **Hands-on support from experienced consultants can help validate internal strategies and accelerate implementation.**
- 2 **Partnering with state-level agencies unlocks critical resources such as energy audits and potential funding streams.**
- 3 **Strong internal leadership ensures follow-through on grant applications, stakeholder outreach and project momentum.**
- 4 **Clear program structure and planning tools, such as the Before Action Review and TA Plan, help teams stay focused on their goals and deliverables.**
- 5 **Providing early access to reporting questions and improving coordination with state agencies can enhance efficiency and clarity of communication.**

WHAT'S NEXT?



Looking ahead, Total Concept plans to expand its staff capacity to support new educational and development initiatives, particularly if its Energy Outreach Colorado contract is approved. The organization will continue to leverage relationships with Energy Outreach Colorado and the Colorado Energy Office to identify additional funding sources and expand its pipeline of energy-related projects. Finalizing a business plan for energy efficiency and renewable energy services remains a key priority, with an emphasis on outreach and education for local residents and businesses. As part of its next phase, Total Concept will also enhance community engagement efforts, using potential outreach funds to increase awareness of available energy programs such as Solar for All, and streamline internal processes to help residents more easily navigate and access these opportunities.