

CDFIS: DRIVING RURAL DEVELOPMENT

BLUEBERRY FIELDS COOPERATIVE

RESIDENTS PURCHASE MOBILE HOME COMMUNITY

Brunswick, ME

CDFI: GENESIS COMMUNITY LOAN FUND

When residents of the former Linnhaven Mobile Home Park in Brunswick, Maine learned the longtime family owner of the property was putting it up for sale, they feared what many mobile home communities in Maine and across the country have experienced - outside real estate investors buying parks, then raising rents and reducing maintenance to maximize profits. That often pushes residents out of the homes they own, as they don't own the land underneath.

With guidance from the Cooperative Development Institute, this vulnerable community of seniors, veterans, and families organized quickly, navigated legal and technical hurdles, and overcame understandable fear and doubts to vote unanimously to form the resident Blueberry Fields Cooperative, named after the wild blueberry fields that are part of their land.

Genesis Community Loan Fund, a certified nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution, stepped in and brought other investors, partnering with MaineHousing and the Town of Brunswick to assemble a \$27 million financing package that made resident ownership possible. That investment and purchase in October 2024 protected the affordable housing of 278 households and kept one of Maine's largest naturally occurring (non-subsidized) affordable communities intact.

One year later, the cooperative has created long-term stability and self-determination - residents now control their future, maintain the park they care about, and ensure that a supportive, intergenerational neighborhood will remain affordable in the years ahead.

