

CONTACT

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BY THE NUMBERS

(1982-present)

Year Founded: 1982

Location: Coachella, CA

Jobs Created: 6,661

Housing Units Developed:
4,342

Financing Secured: \$673M

College Scholarships Provided:
628

The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) was founded in 1982 by a group of community advocates and local community and business leaders who wanted to address the substandard living conditions of farmworkers and other low-income families in the Coachella Valley. Coachella Valley is a largely agricultural region located in the desert area of eastern Riverside County in Southern California.

CVHC serves low-income individuals and families through its many housing programs. CVHC's single-family division serves families who have a strong motivation to become homeowners, but who are unable to purchase housing on the open market. Today, CVHC is one of nine U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance providers in California and is among the largest producers of Mutual Self-Help Housing in the country. CVHC has helped more than 1,600 families fulfill their dream of homeownership through this innovative program—an accomplishment worthy of celebration and one that is shared with USDA.

Through its rental housing program, CVHC serves families and individuals seeking housing as a path to homeownership and individuals with special needs who are not accommodated by the private market. CVHC provides residents with a pipeline of critical community services, including early childhood education programs, after-school kids' clubs, homeownership and financial education classes, computer technology classes, English-as-a-Second-Language instruction, an alternative high school diploma and GED program for adults, tutoring, homework assistance, cultural music and dance instruction, a summer tennis camp program for youth, and a myriad of other opportunities that enrich the lives of the people living in the 2,426 units of rental housing that CVHC operates.

Agxibel Barajas

Ms. Agxibel Barajas was always a gifted student whose immigrant, farmworker parents—Victor and Veronica—wanted more for her and her two brothers than laboring in the hot desert sun. "I remember how important education has always been to my parents. They always encouraged us. They wanted us to have a home where my brothers and I could be in the same school, have our own rooms, be able to study, and grow up with choices."

That's why Ms. Barajas' parents signed up to participate in CVHC's Mutual Self-Help Housing program in 1996. After working full-time jobs, the Barajas helped build their own home until dusk on nights and weekends alongside eight other families. With the help of a \$76,800 USDA Section 502 Direct Loan, the Barajas moved into their house later that year with over \$11,000 in sweat equity.

Ms. Barajas' connection to CVHC did not end with a stable home. The hardworking student also received a John F. Mealey Scholarship from 2003 to 2009. With this support, she graduated from the University of Southern California in 2007 with a major in business administration and finance and went on to earned her law degree from the University of Arizona in 2012. Her two older brothers also are college graduates and received CVHC scholarships. Today, Ms. Barajas practices law at her own firm in Coachella Valley.

