Enterprise is a leading advocate for the Section 4 Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing (Section 4) program. Over the past 10 years, Enterprise has distributed approximately $80 million in Section 4 grants and loans to more than 900 local nonprofit organizations across 48 states and Puerto Rico. These organizations develop affordable housing, finance small businesses, revitalize commercial corridors, and help address local health care, child care, education and safety needs.

Section 4 is the only federal program that is exclusively focused on increasing the effectiveness of these organizations. Through grants, loans, training and guidance, Section 4 provides local organizations with the staffing, program development and financial resources to maximize the impact of the services they provide and ensure the long-term sustainability of their investments.

With Section 4, organizations develop core skills that strengthen their ability to implement HUD programs, raise capital for community development and affordable housing, coordinate on cross-programmatic, place-based approaches, and facilitate knowledge sharing.

**Spotlight on Section 4 Grantee: Motivation Education & Training, Inc.**

Incorporated in 1967, Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET) is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supported by public and private awards and contributions. Headquartered in New Caney, Texas, MET provides academic and vocational training to migrant and seasonal farmworkers with the objective of furthering economic self-sufficiency in Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota and Wyoming.

While serving farmworkers is a cornerstone of MET’s mission, the organization’s scope has expanded to include all low-income and disadvantaged populations. Head Start and Early Head Start services, employment training for seniors and other social services balance MET’s work throughout its service area.

**Local challenge**

Before incorporating in 1989, El Cenizo, Texas, lacked paved streets, sewer systems, ambulances and other basic public services. Since then, the city has improved, but it still lacks infrastructure, adequate water and suitable housing. A majority of the 800 households living in El Cenizo have extremely low incomes.

Many of the homes in El Cenizo were self-built using scrap metal and substandard materials and do not meet current code specifications that were adopted after the city became incorporated. As a result, the housing conditions in El Cenizo are very substandard and require rehabilitation in order to make them livable.

In order to address housing conditions in El Cenizo, MET needed to build its capacity to provide one-on-one education and to expand into a new service area.
How Section 4 funds were used

In 2014, a $50,000 Section 4 grant was used to provide critical housing repairs for 10 very low-income households earning 50 percent or less of the area median income (AMI). The rehabilitation provided the families with a safe, stable and decent place to live and will ensure the future success of each household. Moreover, the grant helped improve the development of El Cenizo and its ability to provide for its community.

MET hired a new staff member to work in the community and assess the specific needs of each household. MET employed green building strategies and weatherization modifications, removed health hazards, improved energy conservation, and made the homes livable and sustainable. Each household received one-on-one, after-rehab counseling, including information about maintenance and upkeep, energy conservation, budgeting, and strengthening financial stability to ensure long-term success.

As a result, the rehabilitation not only improved housing conditions, but it also improved the quality of life for each family by producing better health outcomes, well-being, the ability to work, and improved finances, along with energy and repair savings. Accessibility improvements were a critical component of the rehabilitation because many of the households served included a family member with a disability.

How Section 4 funds enhanced capacity of organization

Section 4 has been a vital resource to help MET expand its capacity to work in more vulnerable communities and target different types of housing. With assistance from Section 4, MET was able to expand its scope from serving just farmworkers to all low-income and disadvantaged populations. Moreover, MET now has the staff expertise and capacity to increase its outreach and educational programs and improve the lack of affordable housing in its community.

Section 4 has also benefited the city of El Cenizo. Not only did this investment provide safe, affordable housing, but it created the foundation for future development.