

Azteca Community Loan Fund San Juan, Texas

ACLF was established in response to the financial needs of colonia residents in the Rio Grande Valley who have no access to traditional financial institutions to obtain housing, micro-business, or consumer loans that would enable them to become a full participant in American society. ACLF's vision is rooted in our belief in economic justice for all, a system in which everyone, including the poor, have access to financial tools that make possible for them to have a decent home to live in and economic opportunities to improve their economic status. ACLF is structured on the principles of democracy, and we must not exclude those that have been deemed to be "economically inefficient" by a free market system that either ignores them or relegates them to a status requiring charity. ACLF and others have an obligation to develop new and innovative systems that will allow the poor to pull themselves up and join the rest of us, for their sake and ours.

In order to serve this market, ACLF cannot utilize traditional underwriting policies and procedures to manage risk. With the assistance from colonia residents, ACLF has developed a cultural human relationship approach to managing risk, one that is rooted on the following guiding principles:

- We recognize that colonia residents, despite the challenges, want a better future for their family.
- We believe that colonia residents can be successful borrowers, but recognize that this can only be accomplished by taking into consideration the realities of their daily lives.
- We believe in leveraging the cultural and human value of "agradecimiento", that unbreakable human bond that is developed when someone provides assistance to another in his or her time of need.

ACLF provides loan products to colonia residents at no interest using flexible underwriting criteria to accommodate the economic realities extremely low-income families that are seasonally employed, part-time employed, and who earn minimum wage.

By staying in touch and being aware of their circumstances, we are able to assist them and become a community partner in their effort to succeed. As long as we do not give up on them, the people will make the necessary effort and sacrifice to realize their dreams of becoming successful homeowners or start or expand a business to improve their economic status. In other words, we believe that given the opportunity, the people can and will succeed if we engage the power of human relationships to fuel the human spirit.

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