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Alabama—Rural Housing Service

# Regional Collaboration

## New Training Center and Evacuation Shelter Built For Special-Needs Citizens

### Outline Of Need:

ARC of Baldwin County (ARCBC) had outgrown their current facilities in Baldwin County, Alabama. Their need was two-fold: build a training facility to teach individuals with intellectual disabilities skills to allow them to live and work in their community, which would also serve as an evacuation shelter for special needs citizens and their caregivers.

### How Rural Development Helped:

Rural Development provided a \$4,600,000 loan to construct the new facility and a \$1,000,000 loan for specialized equipment loan through the Community Facilities Program.

### The Results:

The new training facility will provide, vocational opportunities and individualized task training for over 185 special-needs individuals in Baldwin County, which borders the Gulf of Mexico. This 32,000 sq. ft facility was built to withstand a



*The new training facility provides job opportunities in the commercial laundry facility and serves as an evacuation shelter for special needs individuals.*



category 5 hurricane and will serve as an evacuation shelter for up to 373 special needs evacuees and their caregivers.

The addition of this evacuation center will provide more space in other evacuation centers for the general public. Vocational opportunities are provided through the commercial laundry facility which is capable of processing up to 9 million pounds of linen a year.

ARCBC provides linen services for numerous hotels and condominiums within the region and has grown to be one of the largest employers in Baldwin County. Baldwin Rural Area Transportation provides transportation for special-needs citizens in Baldwin County that participate in the work and training day programs.

With financial assistance from USDA Rural Development and FEMA, and partnerships with regional organizations, the largest special-needs evacuation shelter in the southeast is now located in Baldwin County and ARcbc's vocation and training facilities are now housed in one building.

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## Fast Facts

**Program:** Community Facilities

**Investment:** \$5,600.000 loan

**Partners:** FEMA, Alabama Emergency Management Agency,

ARC of Baldwin County, Baldwin Rural Area Transportation

**Congressional District:** 1

### Demographics:

- The majority of Baldwin County's 182,265 residents live in rural, unincorporated areas.

### Impact:

- Expand business contracts to provide additional job opportunities for 185 special-needs citizens
- No longer necessary to transport special-needs individuals hundreds of miles during natural disasters

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