Columbus, NE Chamber Announces Availability of Additional Rural Workforce Housing Funds

Columbus, NE – The Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce it has received an additional Rural Workforce Housing Fund award. The award will add $755,000 to the $400,000 currently available in the revolving loan fund. Financing applications are now being accepted for the $1,155,000 in available funds from the Chamber's Rural Workforce Housing Fund and will be accepted through September 27, 2024.

"With over $4.4M in requests for our first round of funding this spring, we expect requests for the additional funds to be very competitive" said Dawson Brunswick, Chamber President. "The first round of the Chamber's Rural Workforce Housing Fund will help finance over 240 housing units in Columbus. We hope our second round will see similar success."

The Chamber most recently leveraged $251,343 in local match funds provided by the Chamber's Board of Directors, the BD Foundation, the philanthropic arm of global medical technology company, BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company) and Cargill to receive a $502,685 grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Rural Workforce Housing Fund. The $754,028 combined amount will provide low interest loans to help push forward housing developments that have paused due to increased interest rates and increased construction costs. The Chamber has provided additional funds to offer a total of $755,000 in this round of funding. The $400,000 in funding carried over from the first round was provided by a City of Columbus LB840 grant and matching funds from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

"As a leading MedTech company, BD is committed to enabling a healthier, more equitable world – and that starts with investing in the communities where our associates work and live," said Sien Avalos, Vice President of the BD Foundation and Director of BD Social Investing. "We've been a proud member of the Columbus community for 75 years, manufacturing essential needles and syringes for health care around the world. We recognize that social determinants of health – like access to housing – play a major role in the health of the community and its people, which is why we are honored to support affordable housing for Columbus residents in partnership with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce."

Cargill's Columbus facility also provided local matching funds to the Chamber's application. Jake Gable, 2023-2024 Chairman of the Chamber's Board of Directors and Chairman at the time of the application, shared "Cargill is an amazing community partner that supports various Chamber initiatives to enhance the economic well-being and quality of life in the Columbus area. Cargill's support of our application highlights their commitment to the Columbus community, and we can't thank them enough."

Brett Rains, 2024-2025 Chairman of the Board, highlighted the importance of these partnerships. "With the support of BD and Cargill, we are able to offer an additional round of Rural Workforce Housing Funds to help builders reduce barriers to housing projects that Columbus needs to continue to attract and retain talent in our area. We cannot thank the Department of Economic Development enough for seeing the value in funding our application and their ongoing support of the Rural Workforce Housing Fund. We are hopeful our RWHF funds will be fully utilized to continue to push our community's housing efforts forward. We are also excited to announce that the Legislature allocated an additional $12.5M in Rural Workforce Housing Funds this past session, and it is our intention to apply for these funds again to continue to grow our Rural Workforce Housing Funds to continue to provide low interest loans to encourage housing development."

The Chamber is excited to offer this opportunity to builders, contractors, and developers looking to build housing units that fall within the program guidelines of the RWHF. The Chamber has contracted NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska to serve as Fund Manager of the Chamber's Rural Workforce Housing Fund.

Applications will be accepted until September 27, 2024. Once received and finalized, applications will be packaged by NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska, reviewed, underwritten and recommended by an advisory committee, and approved by the Chamber's Board of Directors.

Applications can be downloaded from the Chamber website's housing development page https://thecolumbuspage.com/programs/housing-development/, or by contacting Roger Nadrchal (RogerN@nwnen.org) CEO of NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska. Please contact Roger with any questions. **Completed applications and the $250 application fee (payable to NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska) must be received by NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska to finalize your application.**

About the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce: The Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce is the fourth largest local Chamber of Commerce in the state of Nebraska, proudly serving its members since 1921. It is where members of the business community gather to help make Columbus the best place to own, operate and grow a business. Focused on enhancing the economic wellbeing and quality of life of the Columbus area, the Chamber's efforts are focused on workforce, housing, and member relevance. For more information visit thecolumbuspage.com.

About BD: BD is one of the largest global medical technology companies in the world and is advancing the world of health by improving medical discovery, diagnostics and the delivery of care. The company supports the heroes on the frontlines of health care by developing innovative technology, services, and solutions that help advance both clinical therapy for patients and clinical process for health care providers. BD and its more than 70,000 employees have a passion and commitment to help enhance the safety and efficiency of clinicians' care delivery process, enable laboratory scientists to accurately detect disease and advance researchers' capabilities to develop the next generation of diagnostics and therapeutics. BD has a presence in virtually every country and partners with organizations around the world to address some of the most challenging global health issues. By working in close collaboration with customers, BD can help enhance outcomes, lower costs, increase efficiencies, improve safety and expand access to health care. For more information on BD, please visit bd.com or connect with us on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/bd1/, X (formerly Twitter) @BDandCo or Instagram @becton_dickinson.

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://news.bd.com/2024-08-28-Columbus,-NE-Chamber-Announces-Availability-of-Additional-Rural-Workforce-Housing-Funds