

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONERS PROVIDE LOANS FOR AFFORDABLE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

This morning, at their regularly scheduled General Session meeting, the Franklin County Commissioners were joined by Ryan Cassell, Director of Development for Community Housing Network (CHN), to discuss Franklin County's on-going need for affordable, supportive housing for residents and families. The conversation was scheduled to coincide with the Commissioners consideration and approval of two loans to CHN totaling \$375,000 for the construction and rehabilitation of 106 affordable housing units for vulnerable populations in Franklin County.

Community Housing Network (CHN) was established in 1987 and develops, owns, and manages housing across Franklin County, Ohio, renting affordable apartments to people disabled by mental illness, substance abuse and who have histories of homelessness.

"Thousands of people struggling to manage mental illness, addiction disorders and chronic homelessness have been able to find a permanent place to live as a result of the work the Community Housing Network is able to do," said Commission President Marilyn Brown. "Franklin County's contribution to these projects is a great example of how our local and federal governments are working together with social service agencies and non-profits to make improved, lasting impacts in the lives of area residents."

The Commissioners approval of the resolutions included the allocation of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOME funds in the amount of \$300,000 for CHN's Far North project which will rehabilitate 66 affordable housing units across seven sites for low-income, disabled residents. The rehabilitation and upgrades include a variety of improvements such as new windows and roofs, HVAC units, flooring, kitchens and baths. This \$9.6 million, seven-year project includes investments from myriad federal, state and local housing agencies.

"As community funders, it is cost effective for us to provide supportive housing so that homelessness is prevented," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Often, through no fault of their own, individuals suffer from a debilitating mental illness that impairs their ability to live without community support. During my tenure as a County Commissioner, CHN has been a fantastic partner to providing this sorely needed housing for the mentally ill throughout Franklin County. If we want to have a lasting impact preventing homelessness, we must make every effort to provide affordable supportive housing for those who are in need. Nine times out of ten, these

individuals are not asking for a hand out, they are simply asking for a hand up in order to be productive citizens. This could be any of our family members or friends."

A second loan for \$75,000 will support CHN's Hawthorn Grove project. Hawthorn Grove is a \$6.9 million, three-story project located at 550 East Rich Street that will feature 39 one-bedroom apartments to those disabled by mental illness, and will also include one unit for the apartment community's resident manager who will provide monitoring and support to residents.

"We know affordable and supportive housing continue to be identified needs in Franklin County," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "No one in Franklin County, Ohio or the nation should have to worry about a place to call home. Supporting the important mission of Community Housing Network and making strategic investments improves the lives of local residents and provides resources, close at hand, so that people can be in control of their lives and be at their best for their families and themselves."

"Community Housing Network is very grateful for the county's support," said Ryan Cassell, Director of Development for Community Housing Network. "The Hawthorn Grove project, being completed in partnership with the Franklin County ADAMH Board, and the Far North portfolio project will both provide needed housing for Franklin County residents struggling with mental illness. Our mission is to provide stable housing and access to support services, providing our residents with a strong foundation for building a better life."

When combined, these projects are expected to support over 300 construction jobs.

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