



LUKE M. FEENEY
MAYOR

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March 10, 2023

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
4350 Aicholtz Road
Suite 110
Cincinnati, OH 45245

Re: Chillicothe – Housing Development

Dear Congressman Wenstrup,

I write to offer my support for our Congressionally Directed Spending request related to our housing development funding request. The City of Chillicothe does not have a history of being actively involved in community housing development, but recent trends, which are documented by a 2021 community housing study have made the topic a top priority for us. Chillicothe is in need of housing for all levels of income. In fact, the lack of housing for middle income earners is putting downward pressure on low-income housing. Many of our community members are homeless, despite the fact that they have income and/or housing vouchers.

The City is actively engaged in housing projects on multiple fronts. This request would help fund a collaborative project that would have the Ross County Community Action Commission and the Ross County Land Bank, at a minimum as partners. We have previously teamed up with these partners to create the community's first transitional housing project, saving a historic home from demolition and converting it into housing for working people with lower incomes.

With the funding requested the three partners groups would construct or rehabilitate homes on parcels already owned by one of the partners. The construction and rehabilitation bring an element of workforce development to the project that is desperately needed in our region. The completed projects may serve a range of needs, from transitional, to workforce and sober living. We have the land and the skillsets, and there is a definite demand for the product, with your support we will be able to make a significant impact on the housing issues facing our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luke M. Feeney
Mayor, City of Chillicothe



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35 South Paint Street • Chillicothe, Ohio 45601



Ross County Community Action Commission, Inc.
250 N. Woodbridge Avenue • Chillicothe, Ohio 45601
Telephone: (740) 702-7222 • Fax: (740) 702-7220

March 11, 2023

Dear Representative Wenstrup,

I am writing to express my support for the City of Chillicothe's application for funding to develop housing in our community. As you witnessed on your recent visit to our emergency homeless shelter, homelessness and lack of affordable housing is a crisis in our community. Since opening the shelter in January 2022, we have served 430 individuals in our shelter. We continue to see increased usage of the shelter with an average of 60-70 men, women, and children staying each night. Unfortunately, as we experience an increased need for the shelter we are also experiencing a shortage of funding needed to operate the shelter and develop affordable housing.

Although homelessness and lack of housing is a wide spread crisis in our state and country, I feel that our community continues to try and respond in unique and collaborative ways. The emergency shelter is just one example of several community partners joining together to provide funding and supportive services to serve the most vulnerable individuals in our community.

Recently Ross County Community Action developed and opened two recovery homes for women. These recovery homes provide a transitional, sober-living environment for women who are active in a substance-use recovery program, employed, and working towards a goal of self-sufficiency. The development of the recovery homes was made possible through a unique partnership with the Ross County Land Bank, City of Chillicothe, Alvis House Re-Entry Program, Pickaway-Ross Career and Technology Center, and the Paint Valley ADAMH Board. The development and renovation of these housing projects provided additional housing stock in our community and also provided workforce development opportunities for adults participating in HVAC and electrical career training programs and individuals re-entering the community following incarceration. We are now currently housing 10 women in these transitional housing units.

The City of Chillicothe's application for funding is an opportunity to decrease homelessness, provide additional affordable housing stock, and offer workforce development opportunities in our community. Ross County Community Action is committed to partnering with this project. We have proven this partnership and a housing development model to be successful. We would be thrilled with the opportunity to access funding to expand this effort. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Bolen".

Julie Bolen
Executive Director
Ross County Community Action

ROSS COUNTY LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION

2 S. Paint Street
Chillicothe, OH 45601
(740) 773-1211

Asti Powell, Director – asti.powell@chillicotheoh.gov

March 10, 2023

Dear Representative Wenstrup,

I am thrilled to be able to write this letter of support for the City of Chillicothe's Community Project Funding Request to support housing development in our community.

The Ross County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) was established in 2016 to reduce vacant and blighted properties within the community. Part of the Land Bank's mission is to improve the quality of neighborhoods, increase land values, create diverse housing opportunities, and return properties to tax rolls.

The Land Bank has seen success in reducing vacant and blighted properties and, most recently, has taken on several creative partnerships to create diverse housing opportunities and improve quality of neighborhoods. This has included partnering with the Scioto Valley Habitat for Humanity to support their current build for a family of seven, with two additional properties in line for their upcoming builds. Further, the Land Bank has partnered with the Ross County Community Action to renovate a blighted residential property to be used as transitional living, a partnership we hope to expand upon with this funding request.

The Ross County Land Bank currently has nine vacant and greened lots that once held blighted structures. The Land Bank will work with Ross County Community Action and the City of Chillicothe to provide these lots at low-or-no cost to increase affordable housing stock in the community. We look forward to growing our partnership with Community Action and the City of Chillicothe as we find creative solutions to stabilize neighborhoods and increase housing for the City of Chillicothe.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. We are excited to see this project come to fruition and begin addressing a multifaceted issue in our community.

Sincerely,



Asti Powell
Director
Ross County Land Bank