

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: January 9, 2024
FROM: Winnebago County Executive's Office
RE: Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity

General Description:

Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity is requesting \$500,000 to help build or rehab 10 homes in Northern Winnebago County.

Action Requested:

Approval of the \$500,000 Spirit Fund grant.

Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: ARPA Strategy & Outcomes Commission Meeting date: 12/14/2023

Background:

Families work in partnership with Habitat to build or rehab their home, and then to purchase their home at a no-interest loan permanently set at 25-30% of their household income at closing. The Home Buyer Program directly improves and increases the housing stock in Winnebago County and encourages economic development. Increased demand and rising costs have contributed to record increases in home prices. In May 2023, Winnebago County home prices were up 18.4% compared to last year, selling for a median price of \$261K. Rental prices have also risen greatly. The cost of rent is trending up year over year and is out of reach for far too many. These are families that would never qualify for a traditional loan, so Habitat is one of their only options to build sustainable wealth and equity through homeownership.

When Habitat for Humanity International was originally founded in 1976 by farmers in Americus, Georgia, an innovative concept was born – providing partnership housing focused on people in need of adequate shelter. With the collaboration of skilled volunteers and the sweat equity of the homebuyer, decent, affordable homes would be built to elevate entire families from poverty and improve communities. Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity started serving families through new home construction in 1993. Since then, our services have expanded to include home repairs, Rock the Block events, Almost Home guidance and our Appleton Habitat ReStore. Fox Cities Habitat has a long-track record of successfully helping homeowners in Winnebago County. To date, Fox Cities Habitat has built 141 homes, and repaired 292 homes, including the lead-abatement work in 35 homes in Winnebago County. These homes are located in Neenah, Menasha, Fox Crossing, Town of Clayton, and the Winnebago portion of the City of Appleton.

With a total project cost of \$2,370,238.00 for 10 houses, Greater Fox Cities Habitat has anticipated revenue from several long-standing partners including: HUD- \$220,000; Volunteers and In-Kind- \$177,591 Down Payment Assistance: \$100,000, "Fund for Humanity" and ReStore Profits: \$237,204, and Donors: \$192,000 for a Total of: \$926,052.

Policy Discussion:

The commission has recognized Government Identified Community Projects that support or enhance county services:

- 1) Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity improves and increases the housing stock in Winnebago County and encourages economic development through the Home Buyer Program, with help from volunteers and entities who benefit from each home built.
- 2) Habitat's annual budget is based on the number of homes forecast to be built, rehabbed, or repaired and the operational budget increases with each home built or worked on. These funds ensure more projects remain in Winnebago County and these projects progress without delay.
- 3) This grant ensures geographical diversity of the funds by investing in the northern part of the county and increasing the tax base for those communities.

Attachments:

Resolution

Spirit Fund Application