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Pritzker Administration Provides \$10 Million in Community Revitalization Grants

**Strong Communities Program Will Assist 68 Municipalities, Counties and Land
Banks in Affordable Housing Creation and Community Development Efforts**

CHICAGO – The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) Board today approved \$10 million in funding to support affordable housing and community revitalization efforts across the state. Awarded under the new Strong Communities Program (SCP), the initiative will provide funding to 68 units of local governments and land bank authorities for the acquisition, maintenance, rehabilitation and demolition of abandoned residential properties in their communities. As a result, the SCP will help address local affordable housing needs and community revitalization efforts for many local governments that lack capital needed to tackle this blight. The program is funded by Governor JB Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, the first capital plan in nearly a decade.

“Everybody deserves to have a roof over their heads, especially in a pandemic, and I want to thank the Illinois Housing Development Authority for their work to make a difference in the lives of so many,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “This innovative program will restore or remove abandoned buildings in communities across the state, creating jobs and new housing opportunities for Illinois residents in need.”

Created in August 2020, the Strong Communities Program provides grants of up to \$250,000 to local government agencies to return vacant residential properties to productive and taxable use. A total of \$30 million in grant funding will eventually be awarded through multiple funding rounds.

“We know vacant properties continue to strain budgets and resources in communities across the state, which is why IHDA is committed to helping local leaders as they foster healthy, equitable and stable neighborhoods through strategic community revitalization,” **IHDA Executive Director Kristin Faust said.** “Through the Strong Communities Program, IHDA will bring much-needed support to communities of all sizes as they transform abandoned and often blighted properties into assets for entire neighborhoods. These grants will go a long way to address local housing needs and goals, and we are grateful for Governor Pritzker’s support.”

Program funds will also reimburse municipalities for acquisition, rehabilitation, and maintenance including tree, shrub and debris removal, lot treatment and greening and other reasonable costs associated with returning blighted properties to productive use. Program funds may also be used for

demolition in cases where properties are beyond repair and negatively impacting neighboring residences.

“There are thousands of vacant lots across the state. Sadly, this includes hundreds in Rockford,” **said State Senator Steve Stadelman (D-Rockford)**. “General maintenance on these properties costs the state and city millions of dollars each year. The money granted to Rockford and Winnebago County will give us a much-needed opportunity to revitalize our community.”

A 2012 Federal Reserve study found that vacant and abandoned properties threaten the very sustainability of communities. A home that is simply foreclosed, but not vacant, lowers neighboring property values by up to 3.9 percent. If a home is foreclosed, tax delinquent and vacant, however, it can lower neighboring property values by nearly two and a half times that amount. Over the course of the program, SCP is projected to rehabilitate approximately 1,000 vacant and abandoned homes and fund the demolition of 500 vacant and abandoned homes beyond repair.

“In a time of global pandemic, fiscal stability is so important to achieve and maintain, and this new program offers smart, solid investments to help a lot of people along the path toward achieving that,” **State Senator Cristina Castro (D-Elgin) said**. “It allows homes to be rebuilt and vacant land to be bought, which will in turn increase the value of neighboring homes. It even allows for cities like Elgin to purchase land and work with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to build new homes for needy families.”

For every dollar spent to address an abandoned and vacant home, the value of homes in the targeted area increases \$4.27, according to the Center for Community Progress. By this estimate, SCP stands to increase property values by over \$125 million in the aggregate in support of community residents and the local tax base over three funding rounds. As a result, SCP will increase property values, create jobs, help reduce crime, generate additional tax revenue and attract further community investment.

“Quality, affordable housing is a fundamental human need. We negotiated the landmark, bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan because we recognized it’s a need that government has the ability to play a critical role in providing,” **State Senator Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill) said**. “Repurposing vacant buildings not only makes it easier for struggling families to put a roof over their head, but it also gives Downstate municipalities that have seen their budgets devastated by COVID-19 the opportunity to add value to their communities.”

The grants are funded by the Rebuild Illinois capital plan and will leverage IHDA’s ongoing state- and federally-funded initiatives to increase property values, create jobs, help reduce crime, generate additional tax revenue and attract further community investment in underserved communities around the state. A total of \$30 million in grant funding will be awarded through the program over three application rounds.

“Struggling neighborhoods are more predisposed to have concentrations of blighted and abandoned properties,” **said State Representative Marcus C. Evans, Jr. (D-Chicago)**. “The Strong Communities Program shows the State of Illinois is investing in these hardest hit communities and to help bring these properties back to productive use and back on the tax roll.”

“Communities like the ones I represent really need a lot of help putting our vacant land and blighted properties back to productive use,” **said State Representative Sonya Harper (D-Chicago)**. Investments like the Strong Communities Program going to entities like the Cook County Land Bank helps us to increase housing, property values and helps to create more sustainable communities overall.”

Strong Communities Program Round 1 Grantees

| Applicant | County | Grant Amount |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Adams County | Adams | \$ 200,000 |
| Central Illinois Land Bank Authority | Vermilion and Champaign Counties and City of Decatur | \$ 125,000 |
| Champaign County | Champaign | \$ 69,300 |
| City of Alton | Madison | \$ 161,000 |
| City of Bloomington | McLean | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Brookport | Massac | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Cairo | Alexander | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Calumet City | Cook | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Carlinville | Macoupin | \$ 110,300 |
| City of Carmi | White | \$ 100,000 |
| City of Centralia | Marion, Clinton, Jefferson, Washington | \$ 125,000 |
| City of Champaign | Champaign | \$ 170,200 |
| City of Chicago Heights | Cook | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Danville | Vermilion | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Decatur | Macon | \$ 125,000 |
| City of DeKalb | DeKalb | \$ 100,000 |
| City of Elgin | Kane, Cook | \$ 237,900 |
| City of Evanston | Cook | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Galesburg | Knox | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Harrisburg | Saline | \$ 100,000 |
| City of Harvey | Cook | \$ 125,000 |
| City of Hoopston | Vermilion | \$ 125,000 |
| City of Kankakee | Kankakee | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Kewanee | Henry | \$ 164,700 |
| City of Litchfield | Montgomery | \$ 115,700 |
| City of Macomb | McDonough | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Moline | Rock Island | \$ 250,000 |
| City of Monmouth | Warren | \$ 124,400 |
| City of Mound City | Pulaski | \$ 74,000 |
| City of Mt. Vernon | Jefferson | \$ 168,000 |

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| City of North Chicago | Lake | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Oakland | Coles | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Ottawa | LaSalle | \$ 250,000 |
| City of Peoria | Peoria | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Quincy | Adams | \$ 165,600 |
| City of Rock Falls | Whiteside | \$ 146,800 |
| City of Rock Island | Rock Island | \$ 175,000 |
| City of Rockford | Winnebago | \$ 250,000 |
| City of Sesser | Franklin | \$ 50,000 |
| City of Spring Valley | Bureau | \$ 108,200 |
| City of Springfield | Sangamon | \$ 200,000 |
| City of Sterling | Whiteside | \$ 246,400 |
| City of Wamac | Marion | \$ 44,100 |
| City of West Frankfort | Franklin | \$ 145,300 |
| City of Windsor | Shelby | \$ 108,100 |
| Cook County Land Bank Authority | Cook | \$ 175,000 |
| Kankakee County | Kankakee | \$ 175,000 |
| McHenry County | McHenry | \$ 110,300 |
| Northern Illinois Land Bank Authority | Winnebago, Boone | \$ 175,000 |
| Peoria County | Peoria | \$ 84,500 |
| South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority | Cook, Will, Kankakee | \$ 175,000 |
| Village of Carpentersville | Kane | \$ 100,000 |
| Village of Central City | Marion | \$ 73,500 |
| Village of Dongola | Union | \$ 75,600 |
| Village of Dwight | Livingston, Grundy | \$ 60,000 |
| Village of Lansing | Cook | \$ 175,000 |
| Village of Lyons | Cook | \$ 175,000 |
| Village of Maywood | Cook | \$ 125,000 |
| Village of Park Forest | Cook, Will | \$ 250,000 |
| Village of Patoka | Marion | \$ 40,900 |
| Village of Phoenix | Cook | \$ 125,000 |
| Village of Pulaski | Pulaski | \$ 46,200 |
| Village of Ramsey | Fayette | \$ 175,000 |
| Village of Riverdale | Cook | \$ 175,000 |
| Village of Sauk Village | Will | \$ 125,000 |
| Village of South Holland | Cook | \$ 125,000 |
| Village of Ullin | Pulaski | \$ 75,600 |
| Village of Worden | Madison | \$ 123,400 |

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About the Illinois Housing Development Authority

IHDA (www.ihda.org) is a self-supporting state agency that finances the creation and the preservation of affordable housing across Illinois. Since its creation in 1967, IHDA has allocated \$18 billion and financed approximately 255,000 affordable housing units for residents of Illinois.