

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) received a 9% low-income housing tax credit award of \$1,541,457 and a Housing Trust Fund award (\$2,289,382 loan) from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) to develop Westlawn Renaissance IV, which consists of two new three-story midrises, 30 units/midrise, located on 1.224 acres of vacant land on North 64<sup>th</sup> Street in the Westlawn Housing Development. Thirty (30) of these units are supportive housing units for youth aging out of foster care. WLR IV is part of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion of public housing to a Section 8 platform, and 16 of the 60 units are RAD replacement units. WLR IV is the fourth project in the multi-phase redevelopment of Westlawn, which received a \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant for the revitalization of Westlawn. HACM will be the developer, and .01% owner through a solely-owned LLC, Westlawn Development IV LLC.

Westlawn Renaissance IV (Phase 3) is new construction of two 3-story buildings, each of which will contain 30 one-bedroom apartments that will preserve 16 public housing units that are being converted under the Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD). These two buildings will be located on N. 64<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides of West Birch Street, across from the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center/Browning School. Westlawn Renaissance IV is part of the Westlawn West Subdivision and is zoned PD.

The buildings will include an elevator and be wood frame construction with slab on grade foundations. Building exteriors will consist primarily of cement fiberboard siding with brick accents, flat membrane roof, single hung vinyl windows and fiberglass entry doors. Each apartment will have an exterior patio or balcony. Building design will match the design of the recently completed developments on the Westlawn campus, including the eastern half of the

development which is a certified LEED-ND Stage 3 Silver (first in the world) and Platinum LEED for Homes (first in Milwaukee) by the US Green Building Council.

Apartments will be accessed through common corridors. Units are to be heated by gas-fired furnace heat. Hot water is provided by centrally located gas-fired boilers. Air conditioning will be provided. The kitchen will be configured in a “u” shape to allow greater accessibility. Flooring will be carpet in living rooms and bedrooms, and vinyl in kitchens and baths. Residents will pay for their own electricity, cable and phone; gas and water will be included in the rent.

Of the 60 one bedroom units, 30 of them will have project-based vouchers and 16 of them will have RAD assistance. The project is for families and 30 young adults aging out of the foster care system. Most children who grow into adulthood remain somewhat dependent on their families past the age of 18. Youth aging out of the foster care program have no such support, are expected to shift to independence overnight, and often must find and maintain stable housing with little to no support from their families.

For these reasons, youth aging out of foster care are at severe risk of homelessness. Barriers to stable housing can include inadequate income and assets, lack of a family safety net, early parenthood, juvenile criminal record, behavioral health issues, etc. Additionally, there is a significant need for affordable or subsidized rental housing for youth aging out of foster care. These reasons are the impetus for this project.

HACM will partner with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families – Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) to provide supportive services to help link these 30 young adults with the services that they need to maintain their housing. These young adults often face eviction when they can no longer meet the terms and

conditions of their lease. Our goal is to assist the young adult in accessing the services they need to support their continued living in subsidized independent living and avoid eviction. There will be a site-based waiting list created for Westlawn Renaissance IV.

HACM is currently developing a similar program using HUD's Tenant Protection Vouchers for Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI). Referrals for the FYI program will come mainly through the local public child welfare program-specifically, in this case, DMCPs, will verify eligibility. In conversations with DMCPs regarding the FYI program, they mentioned that at any point in time, they have over 300 potential young adults who would be eligible. Similar to the FYI program, DMCPs will identify and refer foster youth that are eligible for the Westlawn Renaissance IV housing.

Additionally, HACM will work with other local agencies that work with and/or serve youth aging out of the foster system and at risk of homelessness to identify them and refer them to DMCPs. These partners include organizations in the local Continuum of Care, Independence First (the independent living center in the Milwaukee area), Milwaukee Center for Independence, Saint A's, Journey House, Community Advocates, colleges or universities, and other social service organizations.

HACM has extensive experience working with special populations in need of supportive housing. Over the past thirty years, HACM has experience providing case management and service coordination services to low-income families, as well as seniors and individuals with disabilities, veterans, and homeless individuals. Working with partners, HACM currently provides service coordination to more than 1,200 seniors and/or persons with disabilities in HACM's 14 midrise and high-rise public housing developments. These seniors and persons with disabilities (physical and behavioral) can

often be at risk of losing their housing without the supportive services provided by a service coordinator.

Under the Choice Neighborhood grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HACM has six case managers who directly provide case management services to former and new residents in Westlawn. The residents at Westlawn Renaissance IV will be able to access the same case management services. HACM Case Managers will provide service coordination to improve ability to access to services that allow residents to continue to live independently. Case Managers will meet with any resident and will work with him/her to determine what assistance or services he/she needs to allow him/her to live as independently as possible. The Case Manager will then make referrals to services that are available in the community and will assist the residents in applying for or accessing them. Participation is voluntary--residents will select their own level of involvement, knowing they can increase it or decrease it at any time.

HACM also has other additional programs, such as:

- Assistance with finding and sustaining employment, including referrals to job training programs, adult education programs, working on resumes and interview skills, etc.
- A financial literacy program called "Make Your Money Talk" presented by the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp. to provide basic financial education on money management with an Individual Development Account (matched savings program in which \$500 in savings is matched with \$2000 if used for specific purposes such as homeownership, college, or starting a business);
- Scholarships for up to \$2,000 per year for post-secondary education;

- The HACM Family Self-Sufficiency program in which the resident signs a five-year contract to participate in activities designed to increase his/her economic self-sufficiency, with any additional rent paid due to an increase in their earned income being put into an escrow account for the household;

DMCPS also has staff who provide assistance to youth aging out of foster care for:

1. Independent skills assessment and referral to any necessary skill building coaching;
2. Education and training to assist recipients with tuition, fees, housing, books, and supplies;
3. Access to one-on-one mentoring with past and present foster parents focused on strengthening caring and supportive relationships;
4. Access to a peer mentor who will provide informal or additional resources and support for youth, including follow-up check-ins with youth struggling with the transition to adulthood.
5. Ability to participate in a Pro-Youth Regional Network comprised of private and public partners representing each of the five Pillars of Family Stability: Housing, Education, Employment, Health, and Caring Connections. The Network meets quarterly and leverages the resources and expertise of members and includes representatives from county, tribal, and other social service agencies, businesses, educational, financial, and healthcare institutions, and other experts to create a comprehensive web of services that are recognizable, accessible, and available to foster youth across the region.