

WHEDA: Door County announced as pilot community for Affordable Workforce Housing Initiative, supplemental financing tools

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STURGEON BAY, WI – Door County has been selected as one of three pilot communities in Wisconsin as part of WHEDA's (Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority) new Rural Affordable Workforce Housing Initiative.

In an effort by the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority to address the state's shortage of rural affordable workforce housing is moving forward with the selection of three pilot communities and new financing tools for homebuyers and developers in rural areas. After gaining approvals from WHEDA's board, the rural affordable workforce housing pilot attracted strong interest from communities throughout the state. WHEDA CEO Joaquín Altoro said the pilot selection process was rigorous and highly competitive.

The process prioritized applicants with readiness to create solutions that can work across rural Wisconsin. The selected communities identified diverse pilot teams with experienced "conveners"; demonstrated current land-use policies that support affordable workforce housing, and exhibited openness to innovative solutions with new collaborative partners.

WHEDA's \$10 million rural affordable workforce housing initiative including the community pilot and supplemental financing tools are funded by WHEDA operations with no state tax dollars involved. Beyond WHEDA's investment of funds and staff, it will take the commitment of many public, private and nonprofit partners working together to turn the tide on housing issues in rural communities statewide.

Door County's continued focus on improving and increasing access to affordable and decent housing in our community continues to be one of top priority, being named as a Pilot Community through this initiative will help to accelerate access to innovative solutions. The DCEDC Housing Study that was completed in 2019 was a key component in Door County's selection as a pilot community along with the strong collaborations that exist in the community surrounding housing issues.

For the County to get to this point of being announced as a pilot project winner, it took the hard work and dedication of many individuals across the community; special thanks to Bret Bicoy of the Door County Community Foundation, Marty Olejniczak, Community Development Director for the City of Sturgeon Bay, and Mariah Goode & Rebecca Kerwin of the Door County Department of Land Use Services.

An extended thank you to the Door County Design Team who will continue to work together for the three-phase, six-month process to develop innovative solutions for affordable housing:

- Bret Bicoy: President and CEO, Door County Community Foundation (Convener)
- Steve Jenkins: Executive Director, Door County Economic Development Corporation (Applicant)
- David Lienau: Chair, Door County Board of Supervisors; President, Village of Sister Bay; former business owner employing J1 Visa student workers
- David Ward: Mayor, City of Sturgeon Bay
- Noel Halverson: President and CEO, NeighborWorks Green Bay
- Colleen Homb: Executive Director, Lakeshore CAP
- Dave Eliot: Publisher, Peninsula Pulse; President, Peninsula Publishing &

Distribution; Town Board Chair, Baileys Harbor

- James Honig: President, Door County Housing Partnership; Pastor, Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church; Member Interfaith Prosperity Coalition
- Erich Pfeifer: President and CEO, Marine Travelift
- Michele Notz: Administrator, Good Samaritan Society-Scandia Village
- Sarah Bonovich: Property Manager & Owner, Doneff Companies
- Marissa Downs: President, Mosaic Ventures