



Contact Us
mburke@west-central-nebraska.com
308.284.6077



April 2017

Legislative Bill 518 Passes

In a unanimous vote by the 105th Legislature on April 24th, Legislative Bill 518 introduced by Senator Williams will provide the tools to help implement Workforce Housing in Nebraska's rural areas. It is the intent of the Legislature to use new and existing resources to support creation of workforce housing investment funds. Funding will be awarded to Non-profit Development Organizations, such as WCNDD, that have been approved by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NEDED). A one-to-one match is required; meaning that an application for \$500,000 will need a \$500,000 cash match of non-public funds.

WCNDD, anticipating this move by the Legislature, has already set in motion a model plan for the development of workforce housing. Recently, we performed a study to assess the current quality of housing within a blighted and substandard area in various communities within the District. Those communities with Community Redevelopment Authorities (CRA) were reviewed to assess their current housing stock in the existing redevelopment area. As a result of our collaboration with the CRA and the local private funds, we are implementing the plan in Benkelman, and installing a 'systems built home' on an in-fill lot within the redevelopment area. We expect this first home to be ready for sale by July 1st.

For communities that do not have an established Community Redevelopment Authority, we are putting into place a building model that can be expanded to include partnerships with LB840 funds as well as other local and state resources.

In order to participate in the WCNDD Workforce Housing Initiative, member communities must show strong financial support and either raise or commit non-public funds to be used as housing match money.

Workforce housing just isn't a dream any longer – you can be a part of this exciting venture. You can make a difference with just ONE home at a time in your community. Interested in hearing more about this opportunity for your community? Contact Karl at 308-284-6077.

Explore Nebraska with Annual Passport Program

The Nebraska Passport program is a great way to gain exposure to hidden assets your community may have, whether that be a museum, park, restaurant, or shop. The focus of this program is to show travelers everything Nebraska has to offer, while providing them with truly memorable experiences. From May 1 through September 30, Passport travelers will create lifelong memories while they explore a vast array of amenities that make Nebraska great.

Since this program has evolved in 2014, it has seen a steady increase in total number of participants. Actively participating in this program is not only a good way to gain valuable exposure for your community, but also to increase tourism generated revenue.

The 80 Passport stops featured this year, offer a mix of unique adventures; from discovering Nebraska's hidden gems to celebrating Nebraska 150, the 2017 Passport showcases what makes Nebraska special. Some regional attractions for 2017 include stops in McCook, North Platte, Ogallala, and Paxton. If your community has something noteworthy that the people of Nebraska need to know about, consider applying to be a passport stop in 2018.

Get out and explore Nebraska's great amenities with <http://nebraskapassport.com/>



Finding the Right Hire for Your Business

With company growth comes the natural need to hire additional employees. However, many employers struggle when it comes time to actually pull the trigger and hire someone. With unemployment rates near all time lows, it is difficult to not only find a qualified candidate, but also find a candidate that fits in with your company's culture and vision.

Being upfront about the kind of working culture your business has and its core values that make it run, you can immediately begin to filter out candidates who are the wrong fit. At the end of the day, you have to be able to

accept the fact that every applicant is not always going to be a good fit for your company. In some instances, it could be very beneficial to provide the applicant with an initial performance assessment

or allow them to job shadow a similar position for a day. By actively involving the applicant in a real life scenario, you have a better understanding of how they will perform on a day to day basis, as well as a basic understanding of how well they “fit” into the culture of your company.

Trusting your own instincts can be one of the most powerful hiring tools you possess as a business owner. If something about the applicant does not sit right with your gut, then you should pass on hiring them, it will save you money in the long run.



#whatshappeningWCNDD

What are you doing this spring? Send us your pictures to mburke@west-central-nebraska.com with the hashtag #whatshappeningWCNDD and we will share them on our Facebook page. Meanwhile, see if you can guess where this is ...

CDBG Public Works Opportunities

The Public Works program within CDBG recognizes the importance of the availability and condition of infrastructure and community facilities. Funded projects shall develop the state’s communities and counties by providing residents with basic infrastructure and/or facilities with the opportunity to maximize energy efficiency and provide a suitable living environment.

To be eligible, applicants must either be a Nebraska incorporated municipality or a Nebraska county. Another eligibility requirement for CDBG funds is the community/county must be considered low-to moderate income (LMI) per the HUD income limits. A multitude of projects are included as eligible activities within the Public Works program, see below:

Facilities

- Community Center
- Senior Centers exclusively for persons aged 62 and over
- Nonprofit centers for day care, dependent care, primary health, and mental health care outpatient clinics
 - Excluding shelters defined as: hospitals, nursing homes, convalescent homes, battered

spouse shelters, shelters for the homeless, halfway houses, group homes, temporary housing;

- Remodel shelter facilities for the homeless (excludes costs for operation)
- Accredited public libraries
- Neighborhood parks
 - A new facility/improvement or a quantifiable increase of an existing facility/improvement;
- Single- or multi-service fire/rescue buildings
 - Fire trucks are specifically considered “public facilities” and thus eligible;
- Removal of architectural barriers for accessibility;
- Tornado-safe shelters in manufactured home parks
 - Containing not less than 20 manufactured housing units that are within such proximity of shelter to be of use in a tornado.

Infrastructure

- Street improvements including curb, gutter, and sidewalk;
- Storm sewer improvements;
- Flood control designed to influence or affect the flow in a natural water course such as a river, stream, or lake;
- Removal of architectural barriers for accessibility;
- Drainage improvements (e.g. retention ponds or catch basins);

The maximum grant amount for a Public Works project is \$250,000. No more than \$8,000 may be used for construction management, and no more than 10% of the amount of the grant may be used for general administration. The CDBG cost per beneficiary cannot exceed \$3,000, except for daycare centers where it cannot exceed \$5,000.

The application deadline for Public Works projects is July 30th, 2017. Contact our office today to discuss potential projects and eligibility.

More information is available at

http://opportunity.nebraska.gov/files/crd/cdbg_guidelines/2017/Chapter4-PublicWorks.pdf

Important Deadlines:

CDBG Tourism	May Open Cycle
CDBG Pre-App Public Works	May 8, 2017 (Pending)
CDBG Downtown Revitalization	May 31, 2017
Nebraska LEAD 37 Application	June 15, 2017
CDBG Public Works	July 30, 2017
CDBG Pre-App Housing	August 4, 2017 (Pending)
CDBG Water & Waste Water	Open Cycle
2018 Nebraska Passport Application	December 2017