

Forward Community Investments (FCI) and Associated Bank create grant to impact nonprofit organizations impacted by COVID-19

Associated provides \$40,000 to seed fund to support essential workers

Madison, WI, October 9, 2020 – Forward Community Investments, Inc. (FCI), a statewide community development financial institution (CDFI) who infuses capital into economically underserved communities and neighborhoods, recently collaborated with Associated Bank to develop the COVID-19 Nonprofit Emergency Capacity Building Grant to support small nonprofit organizations that have changed their operational model or services due to COVID-19.

The Capacity Building Grant was introduced shortly after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with the help of a \$40,000 grant from Associated Bank. It was designed to assist Wisconsin based nonprofit organizations that support essential workers such as day care providers, community centers, domestic abuse organizations, food pantries, afterschool youth programs and ethnic organizations.

The grants provided awardees with a variety of essential items and services that were not seen as essential pre COVID-19. These ranged from technology upgrades to laptops, tablets and video conferencing services, as well as cleaning and disinfection supplies and personal protective equipment.

“COVID-19 dramatically shifted how nonprofits could provide services in their communities practically overnight, so we knew we needed to act in order to help them,” said Tom Behnke, Manager of Communications and Development, FCI. “FCI and Associated Bank worked collaboratively to develop this grant to serve these organizations, many of whom were left out of the initial COVID-19 stimulus packages due to their size.”

FCI awarded 20 Capacity Building Grants totaling \$50,000. A total of 169 applications were received from across the state.

Based on an overwhelming amount of applications, FCI is seeking additional funds to implement another round of grants throughout Wisconsin.

“Associated Bank is committed to serving its community members and is happy to partner with FCI, who is so quickly able to get the funds where they are needed most,” said LaDonna Reed, Director of Community Accountability, Associated Bank.

“There is so much going on right now and my belief is that the needs will continue to grow,” said Jennifer Waltz, Executive Director, Sussex Outreach Services, one of the awardees. “We will use this grant to help facilitate providing food to anyone who visits our food pantry, during these much-changed times.”

The next grant cycle begins on October 12 and will conclude on October 26. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit <https://www.forwardci.org/nonprofit-emergency-capacity-grant>. Interested donors are encouraged to visit <https://www.forwardci.org/contribute>.

ABOUT FORWARD COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

In its capacity as a statewide community development financial institution (CDFI), FCI infuses capital into economically underserved communities and neighborhoods. Through our loans, grants and advisory services, we seek to support initiatives aimed at reducing social, racial, and economic disparities. FCI clients are involved in addressing inequities through a variety of strategies, including but not limited to: expanding and improving affordable housing and access to community services; stabilizing and revitalizing neighborhoods; and promoting community economic self-sufficiency. FCI has funds to lend for nonprofits seeking to address disparities. For more information, please contact Tom Behnke, Manager of Communications and Development tomb@forwardci.org. To date, FCI has invested more than \$100 million into Wisconsin-based affordable housing projects and community facilities across the state. These efforts have resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of jobs for Wisconsin residents.

ABOUT ASSOCIATED BANC-CORP

Associated Banc-Corp (NYSE: ASB) has total assets of \$36 billion and is one of the top 50 publicly traded U.S. bank holding companies. Headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Associated is a leading Midwest banking franchise, offering a full range of financial products and services from more than 240 banking locations serving more than 120 communities throughout Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota, and commercial financial services in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Texas. Associated Bank, N.A. is an Equal Housing Lender, Equal Opportunity Lender and Member FDIC. More information about Associated Banc-Corp is available at www.associatedbank.com.