



VANDERBURGH COUNTY

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Board of Commissioners Pledges Continued Support in the Fight Against Homelessness by Seeking Approval for Funding Request to Aid Aurora

EVANSVILLE, IN – April 30, 2024 — At its most recent meeting, the Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners approved the filing of an appropriation to support \$45,000 in 2024 funding for Aurora, Inc. Aurora is a local non-profit organization striving to prevent and end homelessness in our community.

The Commissioners' request will be heard at the June 5, 2024, County Council meeting at 3:30 p.m. in the Civic Center Complex, Room 301, located at 1 NW Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Evansville, IN 47708. Public attendance is welcome. This allocation will be drawn from unrestricted opioid funds and must be approved by the Vanderburgh County Council. These funds are the result of settlement proceeds from multiple nationwide cases for damages caused by the manufacture, sale, and distribution of opioids which have recently become available for local distribution.

Since 2018, the Commission has provided substantial financial assistance to address homelessness programming. Over the past six years, \$240,000 was granted to Aurora to fund essential services and initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of homelessness and supporting individuals on their path to stability. If approved, the 2024 request will increase the Commission's annual funding for Aurora by \$5,000, up from \$40,000 to \$45,000. In addition, the Commission annually waives the rental fees at the Old National Events Plaza for "Homeless Connect," an annual value up to \$15,000. Organized by the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Commission on Homelessness, "Homeless Connect" is an annual one-day event that provides direct access to essential services and resources for individuals in need, regardless of their housing status.

Commission President Cheryl Musgrave stated, "The Commission is committed to be a part of the solution to homelessness. Investing in efforts to provide essential services, support and resources to individuals experiencing homelessness is crucial for creating positive change in our community."

The Commission has implemented a range of measures directed at housing affordability. Notable initiatives include reducing the amount of land needed for a home, lowering the required size of new homes, allowing for the construction of "mother-in-law" homes on existing parcels, and permitting the development of "tiny" homes in the unincorporated county. These efforts aim to cut the cost of housing development, ensuring that more individuals and families have access to safe and affordable housing options.

The Commission has actively worked with the Evansville Land Bank since its establishment in 2016. The Commission acquires property through property tax default and has transferred hundreds of properties to the Evansville Land Bank. These properties are returned to productive use through non-profit organizations such as HOPE of Evansville, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity of Evansville.

These combined actions underscore the Commission's unwavering commitment to addressing homelessness comprehensively and compassionately. Through allocating grants, streamlining regulations, and fostering collaboration, the Commission's actions increase opportunities for affordable housing.

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