



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2017

Governor Wolf Announces Tax Credits for City Mission Project in Washington, Pa.

Expanded facilities will let mission help more with shelter, counseling and vocational training

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced that Commonwealth Cornerstone Group (CCG) has completed a \$12 million New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) financing transaction that will help fund a much needed expansion of the services provided for homeless men, women and children by the City Mission in Washington, Pa.

“The City Mission in Washington performs a tremendous service by helping people who are struggling or who have limited ability to help themselves, such as people with mental illness,” said Governor Wolf. “Some of their buildings need to be rehabilitated, and others are being expanded so that more people can be helped. This project will put City Mission in a better position to help more people get back on their feet and gain critical life skills.”

The facilities being built or expanded as a result of this project are numerous and include a men’s shelter and services center, a veteran’s residential facility, a women’s and children’s shelter, and a vocational training center.

Each of these areas will receive enhancements greatly needed by the mission in order to continue and expand its services to homeless men, women and families. A new homeless veteran’s shelter will be constructed. Older buildings will be modernized and some facilities will be made larger so that more people can be helped to regain independent living. All of the changes and upgrades will improve City Mission’s capacity to offer life-changing programming, drug and alcohol counseling, job coaching, life skills training, counseling and case management.

“These tax credits will provide capital financing used to build and renovate facilities that will offer hope to the homeless for decades to come,” said Dean Gartland, president/CEO of City Mission. “We have wanted to expand for years to meet the increasing needs of the growing homeless population in the region. This is our answer to the opioid epidemic that is sweeping the country. The funding is very welcome.”

As a result of this project, two blighted buildings owned by the mission have been demolished to make way for a new, three-story veterans’ center. The facility will provide transitional housing for 22 homeless veterans. A newly constructed clinic and pharmacy on the first floor will offer veterans and other residents medical services free of charge.

The mission’s Avis Arbor Women’s and Children’s Shelter is currently located in two buildings that are more than a century old. The buildings will be updated with new windows and exterior doors, updated bathrooms, new heating and cooling systems, and roof repairs. This will allow the shelter to expand from 6 units to 12, doubling its services to homeless families.

City Mission's Vocational Training Center will upgrade from a 4,875-square-foot building to a new 38,940-square-foot facility, greatly expanding its capacity to receive and process donations of clothing, furniture, electronics, books and housewares. The items are then made available for sale at City Mission's seven Hidden Treasures Thrift Stores, as well as being given to low-income families and residents leaving the mission.

The center and thrift stores provide an opportunity for residents to learn resume-enhancing skills in retail, distribution, supply, and processing, as well as helping residents learn "soft skills" so critical to maintaining employment. These include such skills as punctuality, time management, and decision-making. The center and thrift stores also provide 55 jobs for residents of the surrounding community.

The men's shelter, badly damaged by a fire in 2015, has been renovated and joined with an adjacent building to form an enlarged men's shelter. It provides transitional housing for 119 homeless men. It includes residential areas, a kitchen, a 150-person dining room, and a state-of-the-art Career Training and Education Center. Due to the fire, this part of the project could not wait and has already been completed.

"These tax credits will help the City Mission position itself to help people in need for decades to come," said Brian A. Hudson Sr., CCG chairman and executive director of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). "Buildings will be built, updated and enlarged. This project will allow the mission to multiply the impact it can make in Washington and throughout southwestern Pennsylvania."

CCG was created in 2004 by PHFA to serve as a nonprofit community development entity.

This project is expected to generate 57 temporary, full-time construction jobs at a wage of about \$20/hour. The construction will also support 13 indirect jobs. It's estimated that, over the next three to five years, 61 new, full and part-time positions will be created by the mission. All of these positions will be filled by low-income or homeless people in the community and will pay an average wage of \$10.87/hour. According to the MIT Living Wage Calculator, the living wage for an adult in Washington County is \$9.70/hour. The project also will be retaining 110 existing full-time positions.

About City Mission

During the last 75 years, City Mission has grown its ability to supply residency based programs aimed at breaking the cycle of alcohol and drug dependency, serving the mentally ill, teaching life skills, and providing residents with supportive services and after-care to maintain long-term and sustained independence. Today, City Mission is the largest private shelter in the tri-county area with a current overnight capacity for more than 148 men, women and children. City Mission has more than 100 employees: 55 in business and 45 in programming, medical, and food services. It is guided by its board of directors.

About Commonwealth Cornerstone Group

The goal of CCG, through its administration of New Markets Tax Credits, is to fund projects in key areas of communities that have historic or cultural value and offer opportunities to spark economic revitalization. CCG utilizes NMTCs to provide loans and equity investments for business expansion, mixed-use development, and community facilities across Pennsylvania. Examples of past developments that have benefited from CCG's investment of tax credits

include Bakery Square in Pittsburgh, the Coal Street Community Facility in Wilkes-Barre, and Schmucker Hall in Gettysburg. Learn more at: www.commonwealthcornerstone.org/.

About the New Markets Tax Credit Program

The New Markets Tax Credit Program was established by Congress in 2000 to spur new or increased investments in operating businesses and real estate projects located in low-income communities. The NMTC Program attracts investment capital to low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial institutions called community development entities, such as Commonwealth Cornerstone Group. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

MEDIA CONTACTS: J.J. Abbott, 717.783.1116
Scott Elliott, 717.649.6522

#