



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Feb. 16, 2018**

## **Commonwealth Cornerstone Group announces tax credits to build new mixed-use building on vacant lot in Philadelphia, bringing needed services**

*Families to be helped with education for children, workforce development and more*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Commonwealth Cornerstone Group (CCG) today announced it has completed a \$10.5 million New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) financing transaction for construction of a four-story building that will create a hub for retail and community services for distressed communities in west Philadelphia.

New Market West is a 135,700-square-foot building that will be constructed on a 1.5 acre vacant lot at 59<sup>th</sup> and Market streets. The building will bring high quality early childhood education; workforce development, educational and emergency support services; behavioral health services; and community-serving retail to this transit-accessible location. The development is a joint venture between Mission First Housing Group and Horizon House.

“This New Market West project is taking an empty city lot and transforming it through this construction into a terrific resource for people in the surrounding neighborhoods,” said Brian Hudson Sr., CCG chair and executive director of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). “We’re hopeful that nearby families will not only take advantage of its many services but will embrace the facility as a community meeting place.”

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

Founded nearly 30 years ago, Mission First has developed nearly 3,100 affordable apartments and currently provides homes for more than 4,000 residents. Mission First will apply its development expertise to New Market West. Horizon House, a behavioral health care provider that has worked with Mission First for nearly three decades, will make the building its new headquarters, bringing more than 200 employees to the site.

Mission First’s affiliate ACHIEVEability, an organization that houses and supports dozens of low-income, single-parent households in the neighborhood, will also make the new building its headquarters. Additionally, the site will feature a center run by Montgomery Early Learning Centers, an accredited early childhood education provider. MELC will provide high quality early childhood education for 130 infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The remaining space in the new building (15,000 square feet) will be used for community events and ground floor retail for community serving businesses.

In addition to NMTC financing, New Market West is also benefitting from a \$5 million grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. The RACP grant, announced by Governor Wolf in December, was the largest award announced in that funding round.

This project is expected to create 120 temporary full-time construction jobs. The project’s construction costs are expected to support 135 indirect and induced jobs. Additionally, once completed, the project will create 94 full-time permanent jobs and retain another 263 full-time positions. Activity at the new building is expected to provide \$1.385 million in new state and local taxes.

“Mission First is grateful to Governor Wolf and PHFA for their support of New Market West through the provision of NMTC financing and a RACP award,” said Alfredo de la Peña, chief executive officer of Mission First Housing Group. “These investments, along with the considerable investment of our partner, Horizon House, will bring this transformative project to fruition in 2019.”

In addition to New Markets Tax Credits from Commonwealth Cornerstone Group, the developer also received tax credits from Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp, PNC Community Partners, and Cinnaire New Markets.

#### About Mission First Housing Group

Mission First Housing Group is a full service real estate organization that develops and manages multifamily, affordable rental housing for individuals and families in need. Mission First Housing Group is a family of nonprofit organizations comprised of six affiliate non-profits with a Mid-Atlantic footprint extending from northern Pennsylvania to Virginia. Mission First began in 1988 with a commitment to provide housing for the most vulnerable, as one of nine pilots across the country developed to respond to the housing needs of mentally ill adults. Today, Mission First provides housing to more than 4,000 people in nearly 3,100 units throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

#### About Horizon House

Since its founding in 1952 as a support group for former mental health patients, Horizon House has been committed to helping individuals live a fulfilling life in the community. Through the years, Horizon House has responded to the needs of individuals by broadening its scope of programs and services for adults with behavioral health needs, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the homeless. Today, Horizon House serves more than 5,000 adults annually in Pennsylvania and Delaware.

#### 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/](http://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 contact:  
Scott Elliott, PHFA, 717.649.6522

# # #