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MEDIA CONTACT:

Tina Kies
tina@chikarapr.com
360-630-9300

Village Community Services Receives \$4.5 Million from Department of Commerce to Expand Affordable Housing for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DDs)

ARLINGTON, WA (April 8, 2024) – Amid a critical shortage of over 37,000 housing units for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DDs) in Washington state, Village Community Services (VCS) emerges as a beacon of hope. The Arlington-based nonprofit, dedicated to serving individuals with diverse abilities, proudly announces a groundbreaking \$4.5 million grant awarded by the Department of Commerce. This grant represents a significant 18.5% of the total I/DD-specific funds allocated in 2024, underlining the urgent need and VCS's pivotal role in addressing this crisis.

“This grant from the Department of Commerce is a game-changer for our organization and for our Village Housing initiative,” said Michelle Dietz, Executive Director of Program and Development for Village Community Services. “These funds are a monumental step forward in our mission to secure and provide affordable, safe, and dignified housing for our clients, directly aligning with our vision of empowering individuals and fostering inclusivity.”

Village Housing, VCS’s new housing initiative, is a bold step towards mitigating the dire housing needs facing our communities, specifically those in Skagit and north Snohomish Counties. By focusing on new construction, renovating properties for accessibility, and encouraging legacy donations of housing and financial resources through financial planning, Village Housing aims to create a sustainable, inclusive future where permanent, safe, and affordable housing is a reality for all, especially for those with I/DDs.

“Further, this grant will enable strategic developments as part of VCS’s Village Housing goals to create and preserve affordable housing options and expand critical services that support individuals in achieving independence and integration within the community,” added Dietz. “These initiatives are designed not only to address the immediate housing needs but also to foster long-term stability and well-being for individuals facing significant life challenges.”

With a comprehensive allocation of nearly \$265 million for housing trust projects in 2024, the Department of Commerce has earmarked over \$24 million specifically for I/DD housing projects. This substantial funding underscores the government's commitment to inclusive housing solutions and highlights the significance of VCS’s initiatives in this collaborative effort. The Department of Commerce funds plus funds from the Kuni Foundation, Nysether Family Foundation, and other private and public sources totaling more than \$550,000 for capital and start-up expenses will support a range of initiatives aimed at creating a highly collaborative and financially strong program that exists in perpetuity for those living in the housing.

About Village Community Services

Marking its 60th Anniversary year, Village Community Services stands as a testament to enduring commitment and innovative solutions for individuals with I/DDs, having provided supported living, supported employment, and on-the-job training, community inclusion, life skills education, and music and arts programming, and has been at the forefront of creating meaningful change for individuals with I/DDs since its establishment in 1964. From Residential Supported Living and Employment Services to the enriching programs of the Village Experience Learning Center and Village Music and Arts, VCS champions a diverse, inclusive community where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. VCS’s participants live, work, and recreate in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit counties. For more information about VCS and their impactful work, visit www.villagecommunitysvcs.org or call 360- 653-7752.

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